

Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment

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Editorial

Dear me, once more to the breach dear friends, cry God for Harry, for England and St. George. This issue has been delayed by my editing APooMI!, by attending Conflux, followed by the consequences of a job change (after seven years) and re-location coinciding with a whole of house painting exercise. I hope you like this new format and that my mailing comments to issues #217 and #218 are not too late to still be of interest.

The reason for this is not 'E-Angst' over proposed changes to ANZAPA (although I need this 'innovation' at this time like I need a bowel transplant!), but change of

employment and the consequent need to re-format my fannish activities and 'E-existence' to reflect the realities of a new workplace and set of work pressures.

After more than six years at NSW TAFE's OTEN (the open training and education network) and a second re-structure at this workplace, with no administratively valid reason, OTEN becomes CLI (fondly referred to by staff as E. Coli - 'the Education Centre Of Less Innovation') and I am off to the NSW Education Department's Measurement Unit which is at Bankstown, just across the park from the public library where I have organised two single day Freecons.

I hope to see you at some time soon, maybe at a Bankstown Freecon?

Late News

Notes on my attending the funeral of the life of Gladys Frances Goodwin MacCartie (nee Richmond) 27 Nov 1905 (Balham England) to Sunday 18 July 2004, Liberal Catholic church Gordon.

On Wednesday July 21 I took a day off work to support my mother by attending the funeral service for Gladys' (our across the street neighbour). Over the last few years mother has spent a great deal of time with Gladys and provided much of the practical support that allowed her to stay in her home until the weeks before her demise, rather than being consigned to a nursing home.

A feature of the service was a twelve page desk top published booklet, summarising Gladys' long life, many interests and achievements, including forty six photographs of scenes from her life from 1908 to 2004. When you stop to think about it, this is an astonishing technical feat, now rendered routine by common 'household' technology. Put together in a day or two, this is the sort of thing that during Gladys' early life would have required the services of a major city newspaper and would have been reserved for Royalty.

I expect that it will be a very long time before I meet someone who has lived longer or more fully than Gladys.

Those present at her funeral service consisting of her family, Theosophical Society connections, Liberal Catholic church congregation, neighbours, family by adoption and friends collected over 70 years in Australia.

The service was conducted by a retired Bishop and took place at the Gordon, Liberal Catholic church, which is a small denomination with a reputation for being fond of church ritual and is a faith strongly linked to the Theosophical Society, a spiritualist movement with its origins in the 1890's 'New Dawn' movement (which was to strongly influence the pre-SF 'Spec. Fiction' of its time – see Edgar Rice Burroughs and other popular writers of the pre-WW1 period.)

I think on reflection I was more affected by Gladys' passing than I had expected. That week was pretty much lost due to a recurrence of an extended episode of the back pain-stomach ulcer-interrupted sleep malady that I go through from time to time, usually at times of stress or great anxiety. I caught myself doing some of the grief things that I do at times like this, burying myself in a longish SF book and looking up the Basenji lost and found websites. After the funeral I realised that for Gladys' family I had been a witness to death passing through all three generations of one family, Gladys' mother (the very memorable 'Ma of Eulabah') her only son Peter and then finally Gladys.

The Angel of death has been a frequent and unwelcome caller of late, with the deaths of my Father, my Uncle and three (of four) of our immediate neighbours in the past two years.

That said, there were some surprising traces of Science Fiction Fandom to be noticed in the wrap up of Gladys' life. I well recall that her son Peter (who predeceased Gladys by several years) being the only person that I knew before entering SF Fandom who had an account at the Galaxy bookshop. He was a 'big fan of SF' although he was never to attend an Australian SF convention. In fact up until the final infirmities that preceded his death, I had been plotting ways and means get him to Aussiecon three. Peter was quite proud of the fact that he had 'turned on' several of his partner's children and grand children to reading SF. A thought that ANZAPANs might like to explore is how Peter's interest in SF may have followed as a consequence to

his exposure and reaction to his mother's spiritual beliefs? At the reception after the funeral service I was very surprised to meet David Ritchie. David is one of the (three-ish) surviving members of the 1952 Sydney SF convention and he has attended some recent Sydney Futurian meetings and most Sydney Freecons. David said that he had known Gladys for over 35 years through attending their common church!

When I introduced David to my mother (to prove that not all my SF friends and contacts are imaginary) David described himself as more of a 'Past-urian' these days rather than a 'Futurian'.

Garry P Dalrymple

Books Read, February 10 to July 30, 2004

- 05 Feb to Feb 11 'The three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch' by Phillip K Dick 204 pages © 1964.
- 12 Feb to 13 Feb 'Wind Engines' (windmills etc.) 80 pages © 1910 and 1985 by F E Powell, Lost Technology Series Reprinted by Lindsay Publications Inc.
- 14 Feb to 21 Feb 'Second Colonisation' 694 pages © 1999 by Harry Turtledove.
- 04 to 07 March, the December edition of the Fortean Times 120 pages © 2003
- 27 Feb to 12 Mar 'The Eighty minute hour' 288 pages © 1974 by Brian Aldiss.
- 14 to 17 March 'The Reproductive System' 192 pages © 1968 by John Sladek.
- 17 to 24 March 'The Martian Race' 469 pages © 1999 by Greg Benford.
- 29 March to May (set aside) 'Darwin's Shooter' 694 pages © 1999 by some dude.
- 13 to 30 April 'Far Horizons: 11 Stories by Masters of SF' 481 pages © 1999 Edited by Robert Silverberg.
- April 23 to 09 May 'Alternate Generals II' An Anthology Edited by Harry Turtledove, 299 pages © 1999.
- 7 to 10 May 'Wetware' by Rudy Rucker, 183 p. © 1988
- 10 to 15 May 'Bikini Planet' by David Garnett, 344 pages, © 2000 (NB this book contains several pages of short Blurbs by what seems to be almost the whole contingent of living UK SF&F writers. It makes me think that this 'blurbfest' was organized at a UK SF con.)
- 21 to 26 May 'Vinland the Dream & other stories' (Anth.) by Kim Stanley Robinson, 410 pages, © 2002
- 27 May to 04 June 'Saint Liebowitz and the Wild Horse Woman' © is claimed by the Estate of the late Walter M. Miller Jr. and the assistance of Terry Bisson is credited, 403 pages, © 1997
- June 6 to 16, 'The Star Spangled Future'

An Anthology by **Norman Spinrad**, 401 pages, © 1979
17 to 26 June, 'The Skeptic Winter 2004',
Edited by **Barry Williams**, 72 pages © 2004
17 to 26 June '1943 The Victory that never was'
by **John Grigg**, 252 pages © 1980
27 June to 06 July, 'Nomansland' by **D.G. Compton**,
285 pages © 1993
14 to 16 July, 'Ephemeral Gods' by **Felix N Jenkins**,
42 pages (privately printed, available from Author)
June 17 to July 17 'Worlds' by **Joe Haldeman**,
262 pages © 1981
18 to 22 July, 'A Civil Campaign'
by **Lois McMaster Bujold**, 405 pages © 1999
23 to ?? July, 'A History of Warfare' by **John Keegan**
432 pages © 1993

Mailing comments for ANZAPA issue # 217 of February 2004

Comment on the following Mailing comments. In the following pages you will notice that the zine titles are underlined and listed in OBO order. If your zine's title is in **bold** then you had something to say to me last time. I have also tried to underline the topic of your responses to my earlier zine. I hope this form of organising mailing comments makes it easier for you to find the points of common interest that we share as you do a first quick read through of this issues conglomeration of zines.

MOZ one – Murray Moore

Dear Murray I have a similar birth order chronological inconsistency, per our birth certificates, my older brother was born when my mother was 'about thirty', however my birth certificate issued several years later says that mother was 26 when I was born.

Megatheriums for Breakfast 39 – David Grigg

There was a time when I used to walk the streets with a listening to recording of (several dogs ago) the Radio National Science programs. They fairly neatly timed an hour long walk. Read the rest of your contribution with interest, but no further comments at this time.

You Really Know You're Home When You Find a Wombat in Your Bed #91 – Cath Ortlieb

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Intermittent Muse #2 – Michael F. Green

Re-"Restructuring" much the same is happening in NSW for no visible advantage. One of these days there will

be books documenting the crime of 'economic treason', citing the enormous loss of economic utility of these 'reforms' have caused while 'savings' (if any) have been illusory. Somewhere this unexamined ideology has been adopted that 'less is better', supplanting a Keynesian appreciation of the productivity and multiplier effect of investment whether from private or by government sources.

Intermittent Muse #3 – Michael F. Green

I sympathise with your discomfort over the sexual harassment matter. I was affected by a blow up between two people that I had planned to rely on in running a two day Sydney Freecon. That is to say it all blew up in the final two weeks before the con and while I was trying to finalise the con program. I spent a great deal of time trying to conciliate the dispute so that each could consider attending.

From this experience I would say that if it ever recurred I would be more inclined to cancel the con and hand out duelling pistols rather than spend any time attempting to mediate and reconcile. At least pistols at dawn would have put an end to the conflict.

At OTEN there was a bloke who helped visually impaired NSW TAFE students. He is blind and enjoys doing carpentry and also does website designing. Quite an impressive example of Ability and effort triumphing over 'disability'.

Intermittent Muse #4 – Michael F. Green

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

From the Lair of the Lynx #24 – LynC

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Land of 10,000 Loons – Jeanne Mealy

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Everyday Practical Desperation – David Cummer

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Les Chattes Parties 69 – Sally Yeoland

Thank you for your comments about my father's death. It is true that you can get used to almost anything, we all knew for some years that father would eventually die due to his illness, but you get used to a 'career' of cycles of treatments and trips to hospital. A part of my mother's

disorientation at the moment is the absence of the treatment routine that had been a feature of the last decade or so, instead she has to negotiate the maze of probate, property transfers and the adjustment of benefit entitlements. Dementia is a thing that I fear. Many years ago a near neighbour, Mrs Jones, was put into a nursing home with dementia and I accompanied my mother on a visit to her, the 'absence of being' is an experience I will not forget. Gladys across the road, frail and 98 still has her wits about her, over a decade older than her mother. Read the rest of your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Interstellar Ramjet Scoop – Bill Wright

Dr Kiss' talk was an example of some of the better types of modern Astronomy talking head, being able to use verbal images to explain complex ideas without recourse to 'deep' mathematics. Observation is very much shaped by prevailing cultural precepts, Stonehenge era Astronomers looked for natural cycles and found them, Christian Astronomers at the time of Galileo were too wedded to 'God's divine order' to easily see the Copernican system at work. I would like to think that the quasi-culture of Science Fiction may lead to enquiry and innovation in the Sciences and renewed search for 'Order in the absence of Theology'.

I would not care to say that there is a single Sydney SF Fandom, rather there are all sorts of overlapping interest groups, many of which would be unaware of the concept of 'fannishness' even though much of what they do is Fannish. As for Conflux I think it may be seen as a turning point. Conflux, Magic Casements and the Brisbane Natcon are run as a cooperative venture between a Speculative Fiction Group, a state (Non-SF) Writers Association and some 'quasi-government' funding. Speculative Fiction Writers are of course SF fans, but I think the shape of Natcons to come may come to reflect more of the interest of 'producers' of SF than of 'consumers' of SF. I'm not too troubled by this, as it effectively lets me off the hook. The next Sydney Natcon will be a project of Sydney's SF writers groups (who have the same contacts as the Conflux Committee demonstrated) and I guess I can settle back and run Freecons / SF weekends in my own idiosyncratic manner. Ditmar's search for long words with few vowels strikes me as artificial and is surely just a matter of applying search software to databases. Perhaps you should suggest that he use these to establish a little bit of religious peace, i.e. run the software to establish the true name (and email) of God. I believe that A.C. Clarke has published guidelines somewhere?

OZ SF Fan 28 / Soft Eyes – Lucy Schmeidler

Dear Lucy (my mother's first but unused name is also Lucy) To date I have read the 'original' trilogy and two of the second three of Harry Turtledove's World War books. These are the other 950 pages I referred to. I seek out and read these books with some misgivings, the instalments of the story are a comfortable world to return to but at times the cardboard of the plotting shines through, i.e. Australia is 'exterminated' by a single bomb for Melbourne and Sydney. As for the meeting notes, I guess I might get down about a third of what is said and any of the individual points that I manage to record *could/should* be expanded into a paragraph or more. Some of the older Sydney fans have said that reportage of US cons used to be this detailed and I think I have been influenced by Graham Stone's report covering the original, 1952 Sydney SF convention. As I have said, the ASIM analysis started out as an obligation to document an opinion (I have had two rejections from ASIM) which when the facts were in required a reversal of that opinion. I find Abraham to be a very curious and overlooked figure in the literature of the Christian side of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The original man who renounced Polytheism in a land some distance from the 'Biblical' locations. I thank you for your comments on my fathers' death. I was hesitant to include it, but as I had spent a lot of time thinking about and writing it up I thought it necessary to add it to my ANZAPA contribution. No matches on your reading list, but a possible match on the falling/injury front. Some years ago, pre-ANZAPA, I tripped and fell heavily onto one arm, splitting a muscle sheath and was unable to lift my arm above shoulder height for a month, and of course left handed typing for a few weeks!

Necessity 56: True Blue – Jack R. Herman

The early and long editions of the works credited to Greg Benford and Sean Mc Mullen were of course the Klingon language originals, the backlog in translation of the 'Shakespeare' material of course explaining the delay, the fire didn't help either. On WDMs in SF, the meeting sort of excluded 'person to person' type weapons of the souped up variety. Didn't the doomsday machine involve a tunnel under the US and 'beatnik' (beret, goatee beard and sunglasses) dressed Chinese agents that possibly served as the archetype for Star Trek's first Klingons. On the political front, things are not always as clear as the opinion polls seem to suggest. As the democrats are a Senate only party curious things happen when the votes are counted and preferences flow. I.e. at his last

election, Senator Ridgeway got the highest personal vote in NSW senate history, so that his future may be secured by people voting or preferencing 'Ridgeway' rather than intending to 'vote Democrat' as revealed by the opinion polls. The Greens are flavour of the month, as an 'anti' vote but in a Federal election votes tend to polarise into 'Howard' or 'Latham' votes in the lower house and a different trend in Senate voting. There will be Democrats in the Senate after this year's election the only question is who will be the final block to make up the balance of power, Greens by themselves, conservative independents or Democrats. Deals will be done. Thank you for your comments about my father's death. Freemasonry is not an option I have excluded on principle (as my brother has), rather I do not feel I would have the time take it on and do it properly. We live as ever in the shadow and by the measure of our father's generation.

Panopticon 22 – Dan McCarthy

Thank you for your appreciation of what I put out, any feedback is always encouraging, as I do not feel I have evolved a final format yet. I entered ANZAPA presuming that it was a 'postal' sort of a conversation / convention among SF fans. What I am receiving is somewhat different. From my father I have (somewhere) a drawer full of Box Brownie photos without much documentation. I hope that a by product of my ANZAPA effort is a stream of documentation of how I have spent my life.

Karenzapa XI – Karen Johnson

Your comment hit the nail on the head, the death of our loved ones is predictable and anticipate able as none of us are (bodily) going to live forever. In my father's case it was 'a few more years?', but as you say, the pain comes in at the point of having to say goodbye at a time and circumstances that are not of your choosing. My only match up with your reading / viewing was 'Nip/Tuck' a mesmerisingly hypnotic piece of trash TV but absorbing never the less.

I sympathise with your plight re anxiety. As the Mentats in Dune say 'Fear is the mind killer'. I have had severe anxiety related problems, but for the moment I do appear to be able to 'just relax' but this has not always been the case, even while I have been running the Sydney Freecons. Have you considered getting in touch with Garry McDonald's 'Blue' Anxiety help group?

Ping! – John Newman

Your cover photo of innovative ute parking brought back memories of two similar phenomena. As a small child, the drive to my grandfather's home always passed a car in a tree, trunk growing through bodywork etc. When at High School, just down the road was another 'treed' car. Both cars were Morris Minors. As for your travelogue, I suspect that I covered some of the same territory in 1968 on a family trip, by Car and plywood Caravan, to visit Sugar Cane growing (Rhead) relatives.

Taste not the Pierian Spring #2

– Erica Maria Lacey Barrantes

Yes Erika there are a lot more 'Apocalypse' books that are worthy of mention and inclusion. I take your point about editing, probably the meeting reports could be best re-done as comprehensive essays on the meeting topics, but I am trying to also catch some of the chaotic nature of the meeting, where three simultaneous conversations are taking place. Re Free furniture, I also know the joys of free range scavenging, although my exploits mainly involve midnight collections with a hand trolley of clean up week offerings within dog walking (reconnaissance) distance. My justification for collection goes beyond just 'free stuff', without a drivers license, free stuff within trolley distance is more accessible than having to arrange the logistics of negotiating delivery to home of bulky stuff (and a day off work needed to meet and sigh for the delivery).

Kingdom of the Bland – Eric Lindsay

Dear Eric the explanation for the price drop of these telescopes is simple but a non-obvious consequence of well-known trends. Decades ago they had computer controlled observatory telescopes. I. e. soon after WW2's computer controlled naval artillery. Of late this technology has broken into 'home' sized telescopes. At much the same time computer guided machine tools have become widespread, hence innovation in product and manufacture have occurred almost simultaneously thus for some thousands of dollars (when the average Australian wage is about \$A1,000 per week) you can now buy off the shelf a computer directed telescope of a size and precision that would have cost a years wages and would have had to meticulously assembled by hand over some weeks by a highly skilled and trained professional. These new automated telescopes, ten minutes out of the box and set up correctly can typically guide you to and track the positions of nearly 20,000 interesting celestial objects. Manual telescopes are on the way out as a 'first instrument'. Hand made, special

purpose telescopes will continue to be made, mostly by amateurs for 'off the catalogues' work i.e. private moon/planetary/solar observation where silicon smarties are not needed (a beyond clock drive) or irregular stuff such as some sorts of Asteroid / Comet spotting. The current generation of these automated telescopes is at an 'Altair' stage, second and third generation ones will have amazing image processing/storage abilities built in.

The ASIM statistics were the result of a whim and that I had the first year's editions to hand. As for extending the survey, please be my guest but I have no need to take it any further. Draining the talent pool may or may not happen, but what I find to be more noteworthy is an implication of the continuation of 'Clarion South'. In NSW there is an institution called NIDA, it gave the world Saint Mel Gibson and most of the other Australian World class actors. Coz it was an early 'University Level' trainer of actors and most other theatre trades (the girl next door did costuming training at NIDA), it is now the theatrical training institution of first choice for most aspiring Australian thespians, resulting in a 'John West' effect. I.e. to get in at all you have to be very, very, very good at acting; leaving it an open question whether it is what they teach at NIDA that makes you 'great' or that you had to be already 'great' just to pass the auditions! Similarly, for Clarion South, three or four repeats later, with a cadre of nearly 100 graduates, will qualifying for Clarion South be a pre-requisite for getting any Speculative Fiction published anywhere in Australia, or will 'feral' talent still be published?

A meeting that called the Sydney Futurians persists, my recent APooM! is an attempt to insure that Sydney SF fandom of the lit sort does not disappear without being documented. APooM! may well go annual (if I get enough ego boo reviews and comments) as a catch-up fanzine for 'absent friends' and hopefully to give 'new blood' a taste of what they are currently missing at Sydney's 'Video and Autograph' Sci-Fi clubs and events. As for near by Tiger Moth landings, I am un impressed. Some mornings Jumbo jets attempt to land in my bedroom at 7 am!

Dreamtime by Air Expedition – E. Lindsay & Jean Weber
Very nice stuff indeed. I will be showing this report to my mum, as I would like to try to her (seventies) and my niece (primary school age) to go on a trip like this during a school holiday, while they are both still capable of doing so. Presumably you get where you are going faster and spend more time on the ground than in the air,

as opposed to spending most of a day squeezed into a bus seat in the coach travel version.

Gegenschein 97 – Eric Lindsay

ReYC about SPAM - My SPAM solution would be to allow 'pay to send' emails, i.e. people you know can pay \$0.01 or less for you to receive their email, \$0.20 from people you do not know and \$2.00 for absolute strangers, if they want to rent a piece of your time.

Mailing comments for ANZAPA issue # 218 of April 2004

Megatheriums for Breakfast 40 – David Grigg

The Ipod stuff sounds interesting. Beyond the copyright / music issue, an application in search of a problem to solve. I could be tempted to buy such a thing for data storage, if I could workout a satisfactory way of indexing and retrieving such quantities of data. I.e. there are boxes of family photos (1908-194?) that should be scanned and let loose to the world, something like the Ipod generation two (when the battery issue is resolved) sticky taped to a phone line might be an answer. Have read Guards Guards Guards and Snow Crash. Thought G*3 was an adequate Pratchett, but that the central SF idea of 'Time travel to search for your missing father and then become your own missing father' has been done better many times before. Snow Crash though was a good read and takes the mind to places that the body is unlikely ever to reach. Good enough to be one of those books that you can point out to people who say they find SF&F poor reading but who confuse Fantasy for SF and say; 'read this, this IS real SF'.

OZ SF Fan 29 / Soft Eyes – Lucy Schmeidler

Ah the culture wars afflicting modern interpretations of history, Revisionism Vs received wisdom Vs 'Equalism'. Your final page reading list sounds like a resource list for any number of Alternate History stories with different 'winners' to write history. Read your other contributions with interest, but no comments at this time.

Taste not the Pierian Spring #3 – Erica Maria Lacey Barrantes

Hi, nice to have met you at Conflux after having met you at second hand through your ANZAPA contributions and conversations with Rod McLeod. Would have been fun if we had managed to introduce you to Lilitu Babalon And Sophie Masson. The three of you in conversation would have made an interesting panel at Conflux!

Re your comments about enjoying the physicality of your brother, I do not doubt that you are unlikely to ever enjoy that experience with anyone else, I know that I have an impacted fun gland, but I think that most people these days are just inhibited to even consider that sort of physicality in even a 'committed' relationship. When I was near you at Conflux, I was very conscious of your size and possible fragility to the extent that I was hesitant to step to close to you! Re your coverage of 'Cave Clan' activities, they have an active group in Sydney as well, and if I had encountered them at an earlier age I might have been interested in taking part. I spent a good many Saturday/Sunday afternoons with dog exploring the storm water drains near where I live as they were car traffic free paths passing many places of childhood interest.

Ramblings 24 – Gerald Smith and Womble

It was nice to meet you and have dinner with you on Friday at Conflux, Dea Matthews local knowledge provided for a better meal than I would have settled for on my own. Read your comments about Magic Casements 2 with interest, Ted Scribner tells me that Magic Casements 3 will be held on the first Saturday of March 2005.

Odd News and Nonsense Five – Roger Sims

Seventh and last nonsense – I spent weeks waiting for some public figure to give in and announce that the real reason that they opposed 'gay marriage' was that it was 'unbiblical'. George Bush came close when he stated that marriage was between a man and a woman. If anyone cares to look, I think you will find that early 'Biblical Marriages' were frequently adulterous or polygamous. I understand that some US commentators are of the view that the Whitehouse's 'strong moral objections' are based on a need for an opportune distraction from the unpleasantness in Iraq. Hope that Ditto 17 goes well.

Panopticon XXIII – Dan McCarthy

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Interstellar Ramjet Scoop – Bill Wright

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

The Disaster Rhubarb – John and Diane Fox

With my impending change of job and 're-formatting' of my email and computer presence I am acutely sensitive

to the bother that you have had to go through with your computer difficulties. Alistair Cooke's passing was also a loss to me, of late it was part of my Sunday day of rest ritual, read the Saturday (if I had spent Saturday at Glebe Market) or Sunday paper till 11.40, wait for Alistair Cooke, then make lunch after the midday radio news.

BRG 37 – Bruce Gillespie

Literary criticism of SF&F is not a matter that I have ever greatly concerned myself with, although paradoxically I have always been ready to argue about what SF&F is 'good' or bad reading. The John Foyster as a critic parts of *brg* 37 have made me realize that I should have been more concerned with this. What to do about it? I do not really know. I read predominantly second hand SF (as you can read elsewhere) that is a few years old and short story anthologies when I can get them as a means of insulation from the 'ten-part-trilogy' push of cotemporary SF&F marketing. If I see a book by an author I know by (short story) repute I will buy. This means that I may miss out on recently published 'good stuff' and on Australian 'Speculative Fiction' I am almost at a complete loss, but I do not have the life expectancy to assume that I will ever be able to read all the recent hits. After all, I read to enjoy, not read out of a sense of duty. I do not know what can be done about the creeping threat of the 'Academic tendency' to jargonise and analyse SF&F. SF&F in my opinion deserves to be assessed for the new ideas and scenes it brings, not text analysed to death in search of 'what the author really meant to say'. The slow motion conversations of your letters pages were also of interest, as ever, an issue to wedge into the bedroom bookshelf rather than to file in the garage's ANZAPA milk crates.

Les Chattes Parties 70 – Sally Yeoland

Having spent Conflux with a bout of back pain as a demanding room mate I can sympathise you're your back pain. Bookcase related back pain seems to be almost a fannish syndrome? These days I tend to limit some of the things I hope to do, splitting them over today and tomorrow specifically to avoid giving back pain it's start. Much of my back pain is anxiety / stress related, so I do not hesitate to medicate at first instance.

Ping! – John Newman

Steps toward the Hydrogen Economy is a topic that I also have been following for some years. Before Conflux I started the task of documenting and indexing my midden of newspaper cuttings of items that were of

interest to me. I expect that some time in the future I will be able to provide my niece Janene with an unbeatable resource for school projects, so long as she chooses to do projects on Spaceflight, Astronomy, Alt Energy, Fortean and other curious topics. Currently I am back to November 2003 and I think my records go back to 1977? On your Peacock sighting, they aren't that rare a feral animal, I think most NSW tourist stop/museum & café parks probably have them and they breed without much trouble. There may also be peahens in your vicinity, but as they are better camouflaged than the male of the species.

Way South – April 2004 – Michael O'Brien

I feel for you, death of a loved one can affect people as differently as people relate to each other in life. I am very aware of how my mother is getting on without father and I probably have a dream each fortnight where my father did come home from hospital and all the resulting complications since his death have been returned to 'normal'. I cannot begin to understand how people got through the war years, with the expectation of frequent and multiple personal bereavement. Most of my maternal grandfather's brothers were killed during WW1, and now my father's generation is passing on.

If I had the time, I might like to get into the classic radio SF that you mention, but does it come with an authentic 'valve sound', I have fond memories of Sunday nights at my grandfather's just listening to the warm and deep sounds from his valve TV set.

From the Lair of the Lynx #24 – LynC

Expectations and outcomes – being able to match the two is the basis of enlightenment as per several Eastern religions and possibly the basis of true happiness in a less than perfect world.

I accept some of your point about what you say about my father, but the matter is more complex than that. As an only son of an only son, I am not sure that my father knew how to relate to me as a 'spare'. I can see in myself that there are many ways I am my father's son and this is not entirely a comfortable thing as sometimes being too alike lead to conflict. Between my brother and I, I can see a continuity of a lot of my Father and (maternal) Grandfather's interests and talents. Being conscious of this at times I feel my self to be 'less' of a man than either or both, but I expect we all live with this perception?

The Gunman #1, #2, #3 and 4# – Roger Newall

Read your contribution with interest, but no comments at this time.

Necessity 57: Happy Together – Jack R. Herman

Read with particular interest your contribution on 'work' the defence of 'reality' in the media is a matter of some interest to me as well. Some of the challenges to 'truth justice and the pre-bush American way' start to merge with conspiracy theories, and even matters of interest to the Australian Skeptics, I mean how many ways need it be put 'Thou shalt not Lie' is not a commandment applicable also to those with money and power.

Ultracrepidarian Bounder! #4 – Kim Huett

Dear Kim, did we meet in passing at Conflux? Interestingly we can each 'claim' a part of the Conflux Masquerade winning entry, you put up David Russell and Les Robertson, and I lent them my room for an hour or so for the 'dress-up' and 'pack-up' stages of Les' costume.

I may not agree entirely with your analysis of the future Federal election, but it is refreshing to read detailed analysis of voting trends beyond the 'two-party-preferred' statistics that are less than helpful in divining a future Australian government. State-by-State and local Regional issues may one day bring in a true multiple party democracy instead of the current effective Lib/Lab duopoly and the tyranny of the lowest common denominator bid for the 51st percentile voter. Read your bodily modification comments with interest, but I suspect you understate the difficulties in remodelling. Erect ears would require a major skull redesign i.e. functional erect ears to channel sound e On the fur front, you might consider GM to achieve a Basenji like coat of fur, short shiny bristle like in summer that can reflect hot savannah sunlight (and allow cooling breezes to penetrate) with a bare exposed skin underside to radiate heat. In winter they grow a white fluffy undercoat that covers the exposed underside. Don't know if your (Desert/Alpine/Temperate zone?) Dingoes have exactly this adaptation, as Basenjjs were adapted to moist tropical jungle (screw fly infested) and tropical savannah. The other complicating factor in proposing bodily modification are the support features required i.e. Basenjjs fur is too thin to be maintained by scratching using feet claws, instead the lick clean themselves, like short haired cats.

Siyavilandra 6 – Nick Shears

A comprehensive view of life in South Africa as a tourist. How much is South African SF fandom the 'other New

Zealand' to Australian SF fandom. If ANZAPA wishes to expand our breadth and diversity shouldn't we seek to enrol at least one South African fan even if their membership has to be subsidised by the rest of us? I recall hearing that there was speculation about a South African Worldcon bid some years ago, but I do not recall any more details. Ah! The presumption that evolutionary development equates to an ever upward direction of 'progress', a frequent misconception by those 'for and against' * evolution. I recall that the study of human origins was tied in knots a few decades ago as before accurate atomic dating was available for 40,000 to 5,000,000 Before Present fossils 'robust' fossils were presumed to be the crude ancestral forms of 'more modern' gracile forms. With the dating they were forced to redraw branches of the hominid tree of ancestors to recognise the fact that some forms evolved 'backwards' to be more fit to survive in an environment that offered only coarser foods.

*it is impossible to be 'against' evolution, one can only be ignorant of the weight and implications of the evidence or that you prefer to believe for 'non-scientific' reasons an alternative world view, as in not 'believing' the Power equals I squared R law.

Intermittent Muse #5 – Michael F. Green

Finally some one is talking about Me!

Re your comment - Yes we missed that one, if we had had more people on deck it should have come out, but suppose we had tried to log on *and their ISP was down!* In our defence I would say that Fiona was looking to speak with someone who planned to live forever, accent on live, uploading as an AI could be forever, but arguably this was not 'living' as Fiona was looking for. With parties such as you mention, it is a pity that they could not have got to Conflux for the Masquerade.

You Really Know You're Home When You Find a Wombat in Your Bed #92 – Cath Ortlieb

As a parent of a young man knocking on the door of professional status sport the recent news of the climate of gross moral turpitude running rampant in the major football codes must be of concern to you.

Ytterbium 72 – Alan Stewart

Nick Stathopoulos' Archibald prize entry reaching finalist status was big news in Sydney Fandom circles as well. Much impressed by your tenacity in collecting the Tram tickets, thirty something of each to make complete sets must take some doing.

The Sydney 'Tram' Light rail gives you a short thermal paper cash register docket. Clearly this plain paper approach is a missed tourist / collectible opportunity. City rail tickets in the other hand do occasionally carry advertising for events or more usually confectionary etc. These ticket blanks are installed in machines as a 20-30 cm wide (100 metre long?) roll of 'tape' with individual tickets printed by the vending machine and then guillotined off.

As for your reading list, sorry no matches with my recent reading, for reasons explained in comments to BRG 37. I admire your being able to stick to a reading plan ahead of the Ditmars. I tend to read what is to hand, or the most interesting of the three or four books that I picked up at my last op shop book raid, leaving last months acquisitions to gather dust.

Comment and brief Review of some books read

'**Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch**' A disappointment, not Dick's best work, almost stopped reading it half way. '**Second Colonisation**' no longer seems a blindingly brilliant SF adventure, having long departed from true alternate history point-of-departures. I keep reading these as an act of 'time share' returning to a comfortable world and by now familiar characters. '**The Reproductive System**' A classic by reputation and many good ideas as well as being a 'comic' SF story, is it just what I am reading or have there been less 'comic' SF books of late, with the funny stream directed mostly towards Pratchett like Fantasy books? '**The Martian Race**' was a reasonable 'Science Procedural' SF story although it's slightly future ward setting will soon make it seem dated as the World political structure needed to allow the plot to proceed will shortly seem 'quaint'. First class Martian 'Alien Life form' hope it comes true, highly accurate coverage of how a Mars expedition could be mounted without relying on the convenient invention of 'magic' science. '**Far Horizons: 11 Stories by Masters of SF**' lived up to expectations, good selection of authors allowed to write 'loose ends' stories and to comment on SF generally. '**Alternate Generals II**' was a very mixed bag, some stories seemed to be more of an indulgence to friends of the Editors than serious SF, some very obscure 'generals' written about and points-of-departure that frankly make me say – so what?, rather than making you think 'yes that could have made for a very different world'. '**Wetware**' is mid series book from a series where AI computers break free of human control

and seek to guide their own evolution, which involves conflict with human society. I have read several books that posit a 'Machine Civilisation' but this book (series?) seems to be the best one I have read about how such a civilisation could get started from an 'organic' base culture. 'Bikini Planet' was a rather ordinary 'comic' SF story, I found Chuck McKenzie's 'Worlds Apart' to be a better thought out and written story, but the pages of Blurbs were outstanding in quantity and were also some of the funniest lines of the book. 'Vinland the Dream & other stories' disappointing many stories seemed to be written in the style of 'Literary Art' readers and not SF. 'Saint Liebowitz and the Wild Horse Woman' was a rather strange book, very different in tone to what I recall of the original. Cowboy Popes, Amtrak Wars/Mongol Hordes type plains nomads, Elements of a Cadfael and a Name of the Rose view of Benedictine Monastic life. Can't really guess how was constructed from Miller's loose notes and how much was Terry Bisson's own work. I get the feeling that an attempt was made to adjust Post Roman history to a post apocalyptic Midwest US setting. So unusual that I lent the book to a nun who doesn't read SF! The 'Star Spangled Future', has some rather good SF stories from a writer I had not read too much from.

Earlwood X Files while walking with Mystique, crypto zoological encounters or meeting an urban Myth

On the night of Sunday February 15 I took Mystique for a 50 minute walking on a tour of that outstanding Renovation-belt Urban resource, the local 'skippy' bin population. Mostly I was looking for buckets and other useful stuff of the moment. I found a spare wheely bin, and had plans to re-birth it by doing a lid swap with the yellow topped re-cycling bin (which goes out for collection every second week) which is currently doing excellent service as a temporary water tank (had over 200 litres in it at it's best).

Mysti and I were walking through the Clemton Park shops late one night I saw a 'Alien Big Cat' or 'large black dog' looking at me with yellow eyes. Mysti did not stop or seem to notice it. It turned out to be only the silhouette of a stack of half full garbage bags, lined up for 'green-waste' collection. Really would have sworn that it had been an 'Alien Big Cat' or 'large black dog' if I had panicked and not given it a second look over!

Other Signs and portents on a summer night!

One night in late January I woke up to a bright light, a strong feeling of unworldly presence and a seven-foot tall robed figure that urgently wanted me to do something, something that had to do with my mother.

Well not quite. I was having a what's known as a 'Vivid Dream', a really compelling and 'real' event. Half awake after this event I realized that it could not have been real, as given the junk around my bed, the spectre would have been standing knee deep in a pile of my Round-Tuit papers. Possibly a case of reading too much Cadfael before bed time?

I have had several of these events in the past. The earliest one I can remember was of being an anti Hitler Luftwaffe fighter pilot being executed by firing squad in 1944/45. The feel of the wooden post to tied up hands, the bullets going in and the chill of petrol on bare skin as the still conscious body was being burnt.

These events do feel real and you get a full physiological run through of fight or flight feelings.

I can understand how some people can claim alien abduction and other nocturnal visitations to be 'real' events that they have experienced.

This Sceptic's Real Live UFO sighting!

That's right a real Unidentified Flying Object, i.e. not an object that in the sky identified as an extra terrestrial or extra dimensional aircraft. At very close to 8 pm on Friday 13 February 2004. As the 'hour pips' were being played for the 8 pm bulletin of the Radio National news I happened to be watching the sky and against the light blue of the sky (minutes after sunset) I noticed a dark object moving with some speed across the sky from the North East to the South West horizon. Its shape changed as it went by with what seemed like a tumbling motion as it lengthened and shortened as it went by (column to disc?). At first I assumed that it was a single dark garbage bag caught up by the breeze with that was tumbling end over end, but at one point when it may have been it's closest approach to the observer it briefly looked as if it were like a bunch of grapes, and made up of round objects held together by (strings?).

I cannot estimate the object's size / height or velocity as it occurred in clear-ish sky (spots of high altitude cloud and some 'lower' cloud moving slowly in a direction other than the observed object) other than to say that horizon

to horizon it took less than a minute to pass from sight. It seemed to be much larger than Venus/Jupiter/Saturn but much smaller than the Moon (new or thin crescent that night I think being just after Eid).

A moment or so after losing sight of the object as it passed over the South East horizon I walked through the house to stand at the back door so that I could see if there were more coming. I noticed that Venus was about 30 degrees high visible with a brief search.

It might have been a bunch of promotional or weather balloons, but I did not recognise any colour other than 'dark' on the object and I do not think it would have been a single dark garbage bag.

Note here that I am not telling you what it was, just describing what I recall seeing. What do you think it was?

Crimes in motion?

On Monday 16 February at a bit before 7 pm I walked home from the bus stop via a circuitous route so that I could check by daylight the condition of the wheely bin that I almost collected on Sunday night. I was walking along Miller St. which borders the Clemton Park PS and which is blocked off by a row of concrete bollards (to stop through traffic that would 'mulch' little schoolkids). I heard a strange revving/grinding and a small blue hatchback car emerges, crossing the footpath. That it had been driven through the bollards. It then accelerates round the corner and down Olive Street before screeching/braking, then reappearing and moving down Miller Street towards the major road of William Street. It seemed to be being driven by three or four smallish teenagers. The way that they were driving the car made me presume that it was a stolen car, partial plate STD or SDL or something, this was confirmed by noticing that the back passenger side wheel was bent under, so it was probably a crime in motion. I didn't get a real look at the kids involved, they were just faces and caps visible above the car's window line, so the old school break-in description will have to suffice, 'offenders not seen, but probably of aboriginal appearance'. While this was happening a short round woman and a boy were struggling with walking a large long haired Labrador through the school grounds as someone connected with them (shouting instructions) was following them (into the school grounds) with a large Black/Grey/Silver 4WD.

Time – A bit before 7 pm, well before sunset.

Superficial notes from the Darwin day events held on February 12, 2004

For the first time ever I was able to attend the Sydney Darwin Day event, and through being both an Australian Skeptic and a life member of the Australian Museum Society (TAMS), I was able to get in at a discount rate of \$5 (public \$15).

This event was organised by the Australian Skeptics, the Australian Rationalists (sceptical of religion) and TAMS while the event took place in the 1,000 seat auditorium of Sydney's only secular and Academically successful private school (originally set up as a public school, by BAANSW founder members, but it's escape into the private sector is another sermon).

The day was very hot and sticky, more of a January day than usual for mid February and it put me in mind of the weather during the days of the 'Scopes Monkey Trial', which was on midday TV some months ago.

I started the day with a trip to clear my Post Office Box and a rare opportunity to pick up a parcel during that needed to be collected during Post Office hours. The Parcel turned out to be two books on how to obtain recycled goods. The rest of the haul included the ANZAPA 217 packet, three items of Junk mail from the European Space Agency, a six years delayed response from an American Dalrymple 'cousin' and a Sydney Convention centre survey form. Caught the train to Museum Station, took a remembrance break in front of the War memorial for my father and Grandfathers. I ended up following the back of Ian Woolf's head to the venue. He was following John August, making three Sydney Futurians in a row!

(NB John August subsequently advised me by email that he no longer 'identifies' with the Sydney Futurians, although he did attend the April meeting?). I arrived just as the last of the Darwin day awards were read out, so I sat at the very back, behind a solid block of schoolgirls, a single group of schoolboys turned up later but initially it was just a couple of hundred TAMS members, Australian Skeptics and two or more groups of School girls half filling the hall.

Their unbearable blondness of being?

As one of the last seated and in the back row of the Auditorium I was able to observe that the schoolgirls in front of me were about 90% blonde. No ethnic or Asian girls, all WASP, NESB and LBOTE free! What sort of a private girl's school was that, Lebensraum High?

During the meeting I also noticed that when they left the Auditorium they did so by pairs, and to me they seemed to be identical twins? With few exceptions, the girls were all much the same height and have the same hair colour. I'm not sure what age they all were, but there seemed to be none of the variety of developmental stages that I recalled from girls at my High School.

After the Darwin day events I wandered off in search of a replacement Record Player cartridge (to suit an AIWA LX-20) and a 'Rod saw' carbide blade so that I could saw a rectangle of plate glass into rough mirror or lens blanks for a 'Round Tuit' Solar telescope project I have had in mind for years. After walking around the canyons of Sydney's CBD for about two hours in 40 degree heat, score one for the carbide blade and a miss on the Record player Cartridge. My earlier plans to finish the day by going to the Marrickville Reverse Garbage truck facility, in search of more water storage containers, wilted and shrivelled in the heat of the day. My good judgement was confirmed by the dark storm clouds that grew as I rode the 423 bus home.

I have several pages of notes of what the guest speakers had to say, but I do not have the time at the moment to process them into 'copy'.

BAANSW Committee meeting of February 18, 2004

Committee meeting

Present were J. Brennan, E. Budek, M. Chapman, E. Cocking, GP Dalrymple, M Leventhal and N. Lomb

JB -We have an offer on the table for one of the Branch's currently unused telescopes

EB and MC – Consideration of a cheaper ISP for the Branch's website

NL? – The Observatory would like to borrow the Wunderlich telescope for a display. There was some speculation over the early ownership of this telescope, comments of George Smith's were noted.

Discussion on the choice for a new public meeting date. The switch from a Wednesday to a Monday will allow for an earlier start and finish for branch meetings. Meeting rooms at the Observatory are available on the First or

Third Mondays. Also discussed, Publicity and the disposability of the items under the Wunderlich Trust.

BAANSW Public meeting

News and reports

Monty Leventhal's Sunspot observations: enormous Flares, large sunspot groups and matter ejections were observed between periods of bad weather.

Joss B-H – The loss of civil and military satellites during last Sunspot maximum are believed to have been much greater than was publicly reported. This was kept quiet for reasons of Military security and the financial consequences of full disclosure.

GPD – Discussion of Darwin Day speakers of Astronomical relevance, Paul Davies who spoke on the possibility of life on Earth starting on Mars and Charles Lineweaver, spoke on the Evolution of Life being consistent with the observed evolution of the Universe towards more organised structures.

GPD - Comment on the observable annual peak of Seasonal coverage of Astronomy, especially stories with neat pictures and no story attached.

Alan Roberts' Variable Star observations, a sheet of brightness estimates handed out to illustrate light curves.

Joss B-H – Comment that investigation of observation records made by George E Bell revealed that he had seen most Globular clusters early in the night and then a declining success rate. Testing these results revealed that observational acuity declined over the night, so his whole body of work had to be adjusted to take into account what time of night the observation was made.

A massive Fireball reported ~9.30 pm seen in spite of highway lights (details to be confirmed next meeting), also the Observatory received multiple reports of a 6 am (daylight!) Fireball being seen over Sydney's western suburbs. Discussion by the membership of the proposal to change the public meeting night to a Monday.

Guest Speaker - - Topic 'Galactic Wind'

Joss works building equipment for the AAO and also does research observations of his own

PhD while at Herstmonceux Castle then Royal Greenwich Observatory then British, US and Australian employment.

Due to early work on AAO instruments five Australian companies at the Redfern Technology Park are taking part in the 'Photonics start-up Gold rush'

Galactic wind is the high velocity matter stream observed coming out of the centre of Galaxies and is important for the formation of Planets and life molecules as concentrates and delivers heavy elements from active galactic cores to the spiral arms, permitting the formation of element enriched second generation stars out in the more stable outer arms of the galaxy.

Starbursts, millions of Novae taking place at once, black holes exploding including Gamma Ray bursts strong enough to end all life in a Galaxy

Active Galactic Nuclei a single central galactic explosion black hole

Ring through disk set off like ripples of star formation of subsequent star explosions

Galactic wind can be illustrated by overlaying Hubble and Chandra X-Ray Telescope images, The Hubble 'fingers of light' image shows Galactic wind ten million years after a central Galactic explosion. The outer wind is shown to be rich in Nitrogen, an indicator of other heavier elements while the inner part is richer in Hydrogen.

Galactic wind can be seen in most nearby galaxies and comprises a fair number of the Messier objects (items catalogued by M. Messier to avoid their confusion with planets and comets)

Ultra Luminous Infra Red Galaxies, ULIRGS are objects that are yet to be fully explained, being completely invisible in 'normal' light, but are actually as bright and powerful as quasars

Our own Milky Way™ Galaxy has it's own galactic wind

Image of a high red shift object sitting behind a gravitational lens, not itself visible, these strong red emissions are evidence of Galactic wind and all observed powerful Galaxies have then from the dawn of time

Starburst driven winds were more important at high red shift – Star formation more prevalent in the past, the further back you go than today

The whole sky would have been pink in the distant past!

The New Chandra X-ray observatory (Satellite) data suggests unseen black hole activity.

Simulations of explosions help to predict the shape of what will be seen after Galactic wind generating explosions, compares well with real observations.

Fact 1

Nuclei Bursts were more common than Disc wide explosions, whole Galaxy explosions known but uncommon

Fact 2

Most winds appear collimated, with light/matter emerging through a narrow funnel, which corresponds to a belt of Radio Supernovae (optical visibility blocked) which fade slower than Optically observed Supernovae which is suggestive of a belt of

Eta Carina observation –

One member of the branch is of the view that she is from the vicinity of the star Eta Carina, a bright object that is naked eye visible. She has even published a book to this effect! At most meetings she will try to ask the guest speaker a question or two about how 'things' would be affecting her (Eta Carina) family back home. Hence, most members of the Branch hope the 'E' word will not be mentioned during a talk.

Tonight she offered that; Her Father had been an Astronaut born on Alpha Centauri who visited Mars 4,000 years ago. Her mother whose name was 'Satan' visited Mars after this and scattered red dust over the whole planet to make it a 'Red' planet. She was born on Eta Carina, but managed to get away before the Super nova, leaving her cousins behind.

Notes of the BAANSW Committee meeting of 17 March 2004

(St. Patrick's Day!)

My notes of the committee meeting record discussion of the following topics

-The AGM under the new Monday meeting dates will be during the October long Weekend. It was suggested that we take advantage of this to hold some sort of pre-AGM afternoon event.

-The Committee meeting date is to remain on the third Wednesday

-Progress towards a new name continues.

-Change of the advertised name of the public meeting or change of the name of the Association?

-Consultation with the London Branch proposed to clarify if it is mutually convenient for us to be 'A Branch' or 'An Associated Group'.

-Should meeting advice circulars be sent by post to all members in the week before the meeting (\$30), all members with a history of attending meetings (\$20), or greater reliance of 'email by preference' for Branch meeting advices and by post only to those without email?

-Some history of the Wunderlich trust / Telescope was discussed

-Treasurers report a continuing decline of Branch funds as per previous months, not critical at this time.

-April meeting will be an observational practical (darker skies near winter)
 -Speaker for the May meeting will be Nick Lomb, on the Transit of Venus

Notes of the BAANSW Public meeting of 17 March 2004

Tonight was to be a member's projects night, that is, you present and explain to the membership your Astronomy related project, but on this occasion, there was an unannounced special guest – the newly announced Planetismal 'Sedna'.

Monty Leventhal provided a more detailed discussion of his Sunspot observations than at usual meetings. He focussed on a recent unprecedented Solar Flare / Mass ejection event for which he had drawings that were able to be matched with another member's observations so as to give a blow by blow account of the progress of the phenomena. He concluded by saying that this event occurred during a generally quiet period for the Sun. Monty is also leaving shortly for a few weeks holiday in the UK, visiting relatives and plans to drop into the London Branch's office if time allows.

Harry Roberts presented his usual masterful drawings, in the form of several times sketches of the same events described by Monty's drawings and photograph. The fact that these drawings were timed will allow quantitative analysis of the speed, duration and dimensions of these events. These events described above coincided with a major Proton event that resulted newspapers running Aurora Australis photographs taken from Tasmania. He also exhibited a surprisingly detailed set of colour views from Mars that had been set loose on the Internet without substantial documentation.

Nick Lomb introduced a number of news items
 -There is a new feature showing at the Darling Harbour (Sydney) Imax Theatre, it includes coverage of the Solar Maximum just passed.
 -A event associated with the June 8 Transit of Venus will be a talk by Wayne Orchiston on the history of observation of these events in Australia and the Pacific.
 -There will be a Weekend seminar on the Transit of Venus conducted by the Australian Science History Association on Saturday May 22 and there will be a public talk on Sunday May 23.
 -A book on Transits of Venus is to be released soon. Nick Lomb is writing the half that refers to the 1874 event

and another researcher will write on Cook and his 1769 voyage and observation.

Nick was able to share with us a number of details that have just become known about Sedna, the just announced minor planet orbiting at great distance from the Sun.

SEDNA – Newly discovered Planet / Asteroid beyond Pluto

Nick Lomb's information came from a NASA release and subsequent Internet traffic to Sydney Observatory.

-Currently 13 billion Km from the Sun, three times further out than Pluto and it's highly elliptical orbit takes it ten times further out than Pluto i.e. the 'known Solar System' just got 100 times bigger!

-It seems to be larger than the Moon and smaller than Mars.

-It is very reflective and very Red.

-It may have it's own satellites.

-It is of course cold and dark out there, near absolute zero (less than minus 260 C?), colder than Phillip Ruddock's heart.

-This estimate of size was based on an Australian developed technique, infra red to measure how much rock/ice is being warmed by the sun, compare with the observed optical brightness to conclude how big / surface brightness the object is.

-Orbits the Sun once every 10,500 years (not much change in your daily horoscope then?), 90 AU to ~300 AU!

-This object was found in November using a fairly modest sized Observatory telescope that was equipped with an extremely sensitive CCD array. Subsequent searching for images resulted the location of a 2001 image, which allowed current estimates of orbit etc. to be made.

-It was observed at nearly it's brightest / closest to the Sun, so it is anyone's guess how many more similar items there are out there!

-It's discovery was a product of a search for Kuiper Belt objects, but it's orbit is beyond this and no objects were expected to be found here, between the Kuiper Belt and the Oort Cloud (the presumed source of all the Comets that invade the Solar System).

Garry's Talk - Periodic observations of Astronomy in Newspapers

For whatever reasons, I first started collecting newspaper clippings about Space and Astronomy possibly as early

as the 1980s. At home I currently have (unindexed) a continuous run of these article large and small since then. One day I hope to get them all listed and indexed, but the purpose of this talk is to relate some subjective observations that I can make about 'Astronomy' as it is reported in the media.

But why do all this when all the Astronomy is solidified in text-books or is evolving on the pages of specialist journals? Well Astronomy is what Astronomy is perceived to be. It is not fixed in stone, it is an evolving body of scientific discoveries and it is developing state of public perception. Astronomy and Astrology long parted company, but Astronomy and Biology are only just getting acquainted in our lifetimes.

Well my explanation for all this effort is, that what we perceive to be 'Astronomy' is a mixture of what we Astronomy enthusiasts know from our own reading, what we have been taught, what we know of from Amateur and Academic research and what is filtered in through the media. On the other hand, members of the public, those who are paying most of the bills for 'real' Astronomy, after they leave school mostly they get their Astronomy filtered through the Media (and sadly Sci-Fi Movies), so I thought it might be useful to keep a track of the changing nature of this coverage.

Why Newspapers? Well their message is less transitory than TV broadcasts, documentaries and popular culture references. You can date, measure and compare newspaper clippings for size, quality of coverage etc. and if you are lucky, there are likely to be some indexed material to help you reconstruct a chronology of events that you can chase in overseas or time past publications.

The only objective work I have done with my treasure trove of cuttings is to attempt to look into Halley's Comet, which I did many years ago. My proposition was that Halley is a life span recurring object (look up Mark Twain) and so a convenient starting point for an analysis of change. The 1759 re-appearance was predicted (Halley died before this) and was a scientific 'First' probably only fully appreciated by the likes of the gentlemen of the Royal Society and their ilk.

The re-appearance of 1835 took place during the Industrial Revolution and no doubt the aspiring to be literate paid heed to the advice of their Oxford educated village parson and their shilling to attend illustrated lectures at their local Mechanics Institute. In 1910 re-

appearance was the first Mass Media covered Halley's Comet. Newspapers were filled with all manner of local and international coverage of the Comet and how it was affecting the people inhabiting the nations of the world.

I have not completed this study, but what I did was to seek newspaper coverage of the 1835, 1910 and 1985 comets, covering a few years before and after to see how the quality of coverage changed during/after a Halley's Comet. I also collected references to 'Other Comets' during these sessions with a view to comparing these references to the historical record of Comet sightings to see if Comet 'news-worthiness' increased post Halley's Comet.

My observations for tonight are:

1. **Recurring episodes**, every few years the newspapers announce one or more of these Astronomical events

First Planet beyond Solar System Discovered!

-Usually this means that some new technique has revealed indications that suggest that planet sized bodies are one explanation for the observed motion of some stars. I withhold belief that a Planet has been 'Discovered' until I see a picture, have an observed orbit and real estimation of size and satellites etc, i.e. something you can set a Star Trek episode on!

Christmas Star Discovered!

Probably as offensive to most non-Christians as to serious students of Astronomy is the almost annual re-discovery of a years old thesis that the Star over Bethlehem was actually a Comet / a Conjunction of Planets / a Novae event / a metaphorical rather than physical event / an actual event but some years either side of 'zero AD' etc.

First ever Pictures of Black hole!

-See explanation for 'First Planet...'

New Planet Discovered in the Solar System!

-Newspaper editors far prefer this headline to the more accurate 'New Asteroid / Planetesimal Discovered' (which their spell checker will query in any case). Many years there is a whopper of an Asteroid detected to be orbiting out there beyond Jupiter. Interesting to read about and a change on the practice of last century when they would publish occasional single observer reports of Planets seen on the far side of the sun or within the orbit of Venus /Mercury during an eclipse.

2. Irregular but event specific Flaps

When something big happens Astronomically, with a sufficient lead-time you can get sequences of articles that take quite a time to pass through the newspaper. Post indexing I hope to detail how these (like sunspots) start at the back of the paper in the wire report columns, grow in size and prominence (multiple eruptions of pictures and diagrams) before decaying, decreasing in size and retreating to the middle latitudes of the paper.

Some of these Flap events have included;

The Voyager Missions

The Mars Missions

Shuttle Missions

Important Stages of the Space Station

Shuttle Catastrophes

Big Bright Comets

Non US Astronauts in Space

Locally visible Eclipses

Of the final entry it must be said that it seems to be illegal to hold an eclipse without a picture of the back of Nick Lomb's head. He is a gift to newspaper editors, slow news day? Just pick up the phone and send a reporter. Nick Lomb can organise an Eclipse for you day or night – or so it would seem from Sydney Newspaper coverage!

3. Of late

I have noticed a phenomena that has been technologically enabled by the arrival of colour picture capable newspapers, the Astronomical cheesecake shot. These are quite striking Astronomical images that appear in full cover from time to time. They more frequently appear in the 'slow news' period around the end / beginning of the year. The thing about them that irks me is that they usually have a caption ... and that's it, no real explanatory text to explain why what you are seeing is Astronomically significant as well as being aesthetically attractive.

They include:

Sun images, White filtered and H Alpha

Auroral images, Ground based or Shuttle/Space Station

Nebulosity / Field of Galaxies pictures

'Picturesque' Eclipse shots, Black and White images of Eclipses seen in exotic places

At one point in the meeting a question was asked about 'Eta Carina' resulting from a miss-hearing of their being 'Multiple convenors' for the Historical Seminar described

above. A reminder of what you observe being influenced by what you are pre-sensitised to!

Garry's notes and impressions on the events of 27 March 2004, a Local Government Election day for most of NSW

Ah the joyful Tosevite process of 'Snout Counting', so dismissingly referred to by the lizard race in 'World War' Harry Turtledove's Alternate History adventure in a seven-part Trilogy.

Local Government elections are in some ways more and less regulated than any other form of Australian political life. Councils exist or are abolished at the whim of the then State government, The number of Wards and the process of election of Mayors vary among councils and as there is no electoral funding / re-imburement of candidates, there is less scrutiny of the conduct and funding of local government elections. About one third of the electorate fail to vote at these elections, closest to the American experience of unregistered and non-voting citizenry

On Saturday March 27 gave Glebe market a miss, having agreed to help Andrew Zaffra, by attending Petersham Town Hall and giving out his behalf How-To-Vote cards (HTVs). Andrew is an Australian Democrat who was standing for election to be a councillor in the North (of four) ward of Marrickville Council.

Why do it at all?

As a person of opinions I feel it matters to be able to face 'the public' even if you are not standing for personal election. Members of political parties or action groups all claim to speak for the common good, but unless you are prepared to go and stand outside a public polling place and see who the public is as they turn out to vote, you are only talking theory. The Media presents images of 'the public', but when you see who turns out to vote you can see that 'The Australian Public' are not the faces you see during the add breaks on TV or the voices you hear on the radio and you cannot achieve political 'progress' unless you are able to carry these real Australians with you. The Australian Democrat Party faces questions about its future while its contribution to Australian life is too easily dismissed while the 'Bob Brown-shirt' phenomena has its run as the uncritically examined. 'wave-of-the-future' . I continue to turn

out for the Australian Democrats as they are a functional party structure that continues to represent 'liberal' values, allow parliamentary representation of multiple 'single issues' and remains a pre-eminent third party option to introduce into Parliaments the ideas that do not reflect the self-interests of the backers of the two party elites.

Why help out in Marrickville?

Marrickville is the local government area adjacent to Canterbury where I live and each of its four Wards returns three Councillors (Canterbury has three wards and a directly elected Mayor). Under the preferential system of voting, Andrew stood a reasonable chance at getting elected provided that his direct vote exceeded that of the Liberal (Conservative) candidate. In North Ward there were four teams of three candidates for each of four parties or groups, The 'Greens', Labor, Liberal and the Australian Democrats. As Andrew was given a 'number two' preference from all three other groups, he stood a good chance of being the last councillor elected IF he polled higher than the Liberal candidates, which was a possibility as in the inner city the Liberals are very weak (chose to stand in only two of the four wards) and many Liberal supporters do not bother to vote at local government elections

Diversity in Representation

Local Government representation across NSW varies. In Canterbury there are three Wards each returning three Councillors. Many other Councils are four wards returning three Councillors. The City of Sydney and some others have a single ward returning many (10 I think) Councillors. In Sutherland there are five/six wards returning two councillors. The greater the number of Councillors per ward, the lower the percentage vote needed to get elected. 'Best' depends on your view of how participatory your view of democracy is, my position is that the smaller the 'chuck-out' rate for votes the better, i.e. in a single seat constituency up to 49% of voters intentions can be disregarded, in a three member ward/electorate this is 24%. In the case of Sydney the 'chuck-out' rate drops to less than 10%. I feel this means that most people can have respect 'Law and Order', 'Civility' etc. as they can see that they have a chance of having an elected representative to advance their views even if they are in a small minority. Not control, but a voice for their views and interests to be heard.

Voting above and below the line!

For this election there was a new form of voting available, 'Above the line'. The ballot paper was organised with group / party lists, Group A, Group B, Group C etc. across the ballot paper with the names of the individual candidates listed below their group heading. You could still number your choice of individual councillors i.e. voting 1, 2, 3 Or you could vote above the line, first preference 1 for group A, then additional preferences for groups B, C and D etc. if you chose to give preferences beyond just a 'vote 1' for a single party's candidates. The effect of this is to simplify the 'transferable preference' stage of vote counting, when votes excess to quotas are transferred according to the voters preference to add to the totals of candidates that were a voter's second and later preference, where the voter's first choice has insufficient support to approach being elected. The NSW Government's (Labor) agenda for this innovation may have been to reduce spoiled 'informal' votes that could not be counted as they had foreseen that the flow of preferences would be vital in electing the final Councillors that would ensure continued Labor control of Local Governments. Such is the way that innovations finally creep into Australian usage. The new way of voting can be argued to advantage the smaller parties, but the Labor reasoning probably went that the innovation allows for both a protest vote against the incumbent but also for second and third preferences to be counted when the 'alternative' fails to achieve a quota.

Ward number implications!

Individual Councils have the power to influence the number of wards and usually use this to entrench incumbent power blocks i.e. a three to a ward system ensures that Labor retains control until more than 66% of first preferences are cast against them and then they switch to four councillor wards or whole municipality wards as even if the 'major party' vote drops below 50 to 33%, few independents or minor party candidates are strong enough to appeal to residents in all parts of the electorate i.e. most are local, whereas the major party has State and National so that they succeed in getting a greater proportion of their councillors elected than their proportion of the popular vote. In Canterbury four wards of three was changed to three wards of three (and a directly elected Mayor) as this meant that the Non-Labor Local Government vote which was approaching 50% would need to exceed 66% in two of the three wards

(and 50% in the other) to be sure of a Non-Labor majority of Councillors. It would also be necessary for a single Non-Labor candidate Mayor to out poll the Labor Mayoral candidate. It is difficult to see this happening when most Non-Labor candidates are local figures and non-aligned 'Independents'.

Coming and going

I caught the 7.56 am 412 bus (into the city) and was handing out 'How-to-vote' cards at Petersham Town Hall by about 8.30 (polling ran from 8 am to 6 pm). I left the vicinity at 2.40 pm catching a 412 (from the city) at 2.50 pm to get home in time to vote (\$110 fine for failing to vote, or more precisely for failing to attend a voting place, get marked off and then do what you will with your ballot!). By attending on this Saturday I also missed out on doing a 'Macquarie night'. An Astronomy open night where it is usually worth giving up a day at Glebe Market and getting home at midnight or 1 am after a two hours bus ride!

My HTV Achievement

The following Table 1 is a progressive record of my distribution of Australian Democrat HTVs.

Bundle size	Cumulative Total of HTVs handed out	Last one was handed out at
		Start – 8.30
076	076	9.20 am
100	176	10.20 am
100	276	11.20 am
100	376	12.40 am
100	476	1.35 pm
100	576	2.40 pm

Table 1 – Source G. P. Dalrymple's notes

NB I started with just over 770 ea HTVs and ended up with 200 ea unused (to be re-used as telephone note pad). During the day, some dozens of HTVs were returned to me for re-use, so the actual number given out would be is slightly higher.

Impressions of the day

This was the first time I had attended Petersham Town Hall and the following are my impressions of the day. These impressions are in comparison to my polling day experiences closer to home in Earlwood / Canterbury / Watson. Giving out HTVs I was standing facing west with a main road outside, Water Tower to the Left and Railway Bridge (and bus routes) to my right.

-Much impressed by the way that the water tank appeared to change colour and texture as the angle of morning light changed (sunrise was at 7 am).

-Clouds were present all day, but I ended the day without sunburn and on several occasions the clouds looked dark enough to rain.

-Plants had been placed in big planter boxes just outside the Town Hall on the day before the election. Without heavy rain or watering they would probably be dead by Tuesday. I wrote on the back of my HTVs "Vote 1 – Water Me!" and stuck these in the planter boxes.

-An explosion of colour! Labour adopting bright orange (orange lettering on black T-shirts), Independents a day-glo red-pink for HTVs and T-shirts, Liberals 'Country Road', Greens in Greens!

-18 or 19 people present to give out HTVs, me, 2 Liberals, 1 Socialist Alliance (campaigning to free the oppressed by going bra less?), and four to six each of Greens, Labor and Independents, serious crowding at times!

-Liberals were North shore matrons bussed (Range Rover or Volvoed?) in from other areas.

-Liberal helpers mostly sat behind their table, did not make an effort to 'chase' voters with HTVs.

-Some Liberal intending voters did go up to the table in search of HTVs

-One Labor helper admitted to be from Canberra.

- The (Labor) sitting Mayor dropped by

-Labour had Spanish and Arabic speaking helpers.

-Greens had an Upper House member handing out (see opinions section).

-Independents seemed not to be trying that hard, only manning one side of footpath leading to the polling place entrance, made me suspicious that they might be a Labor stooge operation to draw support off the Greens.

-Gay people and couples. Lots more than at Earlwood, Male gays voted in couples, Lesbians also attended in couples, but mostly they attended to vote in groups of three or more (Lesbian households / groups of friends voting together?)

-Fewer Old folk than I am used to, some palsied

-Fewer Asian voters or Islamic folk. The visibly ethnic cohort was frequently Spanish or Portugues speakers, mostly of above middle age.

-The 'Surly-Teenager, I'm only voting coz I have to', arms held stiffly to sides or in pockets, rushing through without making eye contact with helpers or taking HTVs, demographic is getting older, many are now in their late twenties or early thirties and still haven't learnt the art of the polite decline.

-A variety of dress senses displayed, some 'dressed for church', some in work clothes, some dressed down or wearing their 'protest/fashion statement' T-shirts, some dressed for as for a nightclub!

-A variety of dogs were tied up outside while masters went in to vote, mostly smaller or uglier dogs than the ones I see around Earlwood (well I do live with a Basenji and they are everything a dog should be!).

-Two wheeled voters! The Petersham Town Hall is next to a major Sydney bike route; Botany Bay to Olympic Stadium, passing through some of the low traffic back streets. Several people chained up their bikes and went in to vote.

-Fewer daughters voting with their mothers.

-Closed shops and closing boarding houses up the road, possibly aircraft noise or land value related.

-Families with children almost all under fives and only one or two children. Not sure this is a safe observation, families with school-age children would probably vote at their kid's local school.

-Sets of twin babies frequently seen, dual baby carriages or, His-n-Her baby back packs for a couple's twin babies, is this a consequence of IVF? -The Labor party had a guitarist/singer briefly performing Spanish and Gitano/Gypsy songs.

-Several of the voters passing through Petersham Town Hall were people I recognised as fellow passengers from 412 bus that I usually catch to and from Glebe Market most Saturdays.

Best Jibe of the day – 'If you want to record a really Green vote – bring your own crayon!'

Opinions of day and the election

I asked several of the HTV helpers for single sentence description of their impressions of the day and of the campaign just concluded.

Joel Conomos – Labor Party

"Anti-Climactic, Friendly, quiet and Empty."

Joel is a second year University student who hopes to do honours and to end up working for a Union. This was his second election and he had wanted to help out at Petersham Town Hall and the responsibility of working at a more critical booth.

Barry Cotter – Labor Party Mayor & Councillor

"Historic, We are going to cream them! (Meaning, The Greens) They will not have control of Marrickville Council."

He seemed confident, spent some time discussing matters with his booth captain and exchanged words with Silvia Hale, probably based on pre-poll survey of voter intentions.

Silvia Hale – Greens, an ex Marrickville council member and currently a NSW upper house member

"I think there is going to be a serious challenge to Labor, 4 to 5 Green, 4 to 5 Labor and two Independents. A hard tussle, outcome will be dependent on preference flows."

Jo Hobson – Greens

"Speaking with everyone (all party helpers and the passing public on their way to vote) and it is good to see all parties represented"

Nicola Joseph – Group F Independents

"I think it is interesting that most people seem to have made up their minds before the poll, so there are few last minute decisions."

Nicola has worked as a journalist of some sort.

Liberal, Name not stated

(with held due to National Security requirements?)

"More hander-outers than voters (at times) there are eighteen here now! The Greens will probably poll well today"

Reactions and Consequences

My candidate failed to be elected which was not a great surprise given the polarised mood of the electorate bent on getting Labor out and the Greens or the Independents in. Australian Democrat figures don't seem like much, but are indicative of some recovery of support. If we got these figures during the last State Election, we would have got one more parliamentarian elected and would be closer to being sure of Senator Aiden Ridgeway's re-election.

Results

The following table 2 are some results from the March 27 Local Government Elections

Party / Group standing	Marrickville North Ward	Canterbury East Ward	City of Sydney
	% of vote	% of vote	% of vote
Labor	40.11 *	49.97 **	25.18 ***
Greens	40.41 **	14.23	13.97 *

Independents	N A	14.46	34.97 ****
Liberal	14.02	(16.93) *	11.95 *
Aust. Dem.	4.00	N A	2.66
Socialist All.	N A	N A	N A
Others	1.46	4.41	13.93
Councillors	3 ea	3 ea	9 ea
Nominal quota	25.01	25.01	10.01

Table 2 - Source Local.Gov.Website.something

NB each * represents a councillor elected for that ward / party.

Below them, slowly rotating they could see the Earth, but they do not choose to look one last time.

On the Earth below, abandoned villages stand idle and the dry crop-less fields are bare under a rainless sky that holds nothing but the promise of more heat and dust the days to come.

Elsewhere a huge city glitters through the distortion of its own heat haze. All day and into the night it teems like an ants' nest with crowds of people in ceaseless motion.

With their faces raised in hope, some villagers stand quietly outside the small schoolhouse in the half-light of approaching dawn. They look to the sky.

In space, the fleet of 100 star ships ride in orbit, in ordered ranks and rows, as regular as reflections. They rest on a curtain of black velvet pierced by coloured Jewels, the hot pinpoints of stars and the ragged flames of nebulae and the dull dark dust lanes.

The star ships are so distant that in spite of the great clarity of space no detail can be seen. No flags or names, and you can only feel that each must be rotating slowly and glistening, chilled and inert.

Inside each ship, down a long central corridor stand the almost endless ranks of tall cooled glass tubes. Through the frost you can see a brave pioneer of the distant new world, men and women, families, couples and singles of all races. They stand in the stillness of cold sleep and the silent frozen hope that they will revive under a distant sun on an uncrowded new world.

The villagers also still stand their silent watch as this constellation of star ships passes across the brightening sky.

On the star ship, the message is received. He receives it and she confirms it. Together they both reach for the command settings and make ready to go.

In space there can only be silence, but you could imagine now the swell of triumphant music rising to a crescendo as one hundred star ship engines flare, making a rectangular field of supernovae, which fades only slightly as all the ships move off into the void.

Original Science Fiction!

Opening scene from a Space Opera

By Garry P. Dalrymple
05 March 2004, Word count 543

High above the Earth a man and a woman sit on the bridge of a mighty star ship in their space suits. They are young, capable and hand some, a well matched pair as they sit together waiting, alert and poised to act on one final instruction.

Each star ship is now a single flaming sword baring its passengers ever returning to Earth.

The villagers too have seen the fleet's departing flare and now make to leave. As they go to their homes or to start their morning's work among the fields they say quietly in Earth's hundred languages and dozen religions, 'God go with them', 'And be with us as well, in the heat of the days to come'

Alone now outside his school, the teacher pauses for a moment to think about the centuries to come and of what the teachers of the grandchildren of the departed fleet say of distant Earth and how their ancestors came to leave it?

Exodus.

From the old Sun.

My review of Magic Casements 2, Sydney, Saturday 6, 2004

Dear All

As I have yet to see any 'rush to print' on last Saturday's event I guess I will get in first.

There was a smaller crowd this year. The meeting rooms were half full as opposed to standing room only last year. The weather (rain showers growing more intense during the day) was not was not conducive to getting out and about and the Sydney Mardi Gras march was on that night. For most talks the meeting rooms were half full, as opposed to standing room only last year.

Of the people I could see, I recognized a greater proportion were familiar Sydney SF (Freecons etc) faces and most of the rest seemed to be NSW Writers Centre event regulars, but really I expect that the weather must have resulted in a lot of cancellations of 'psychic bookings' from the ordinary members of the public that this sort of event should be attracting.

I felt a lot more comfortable at this Magic Casements than last year, so much so that I did not bother to take notes after the first talk that I attended, as the talks were of the usual familiar writers talking about their craft and their work experiences.

The print support for the event seemed better than last year, as I noticed a few people consulting the NSW Writers Centre journal for panelist's biographical details to decide which of the two simultaneous panels to attend.

The program of the event is not really 'Science Fictional' (Speculative Fiction being the preferred explanation of the SF initials) but it is lurching slightly more towards fannishness, with a definite third program stream developing, in the form of SF fans/Writers sitting on the sheltered side of the veranda, sitting and chatting while waiting for the clock to tick round to a program item of compelling interest. The appearance of two Art program items was welcome departure from last year, and another nod towards fannishness.

Courageously I entered the 'Flash Fiction' competition and delivered my 500 ish word 'three minutes to read' SF story, reasoning that having paid my \$5 to enter and at half an hour to the kick off, with three prizes on offer and only two entries, I stood a fair chance of getting a place.

No Such luck! - Two of the three prizes were given out with the raffle and about another six contestants materialized.

As every one had their three to Five minutes I was surprised that no less than Four Sydney Futurians had taken part. David Bofinger, Garry Dalrymple, Diane Fox and Brian Walls, all standing up to read their pieces! Overhearing my exclamation at my entry being so 'ambushed' by friendly fire, one of the other contestants asked 'Sydney Futurians, Are they a writer's group I could join'?

A question for which I had no answer.

The prize went to a Fantasy story of the 'I look into a mirror and see I see a figure looking in at me from a mirror'. Rather disappointing, as I was given to understand that it was to be a Science Fiction writing competition and I took a great deal of effort in trying to write a multi scene story that was Science Fiction and could be read within the required three minute time limit.

If they had said that they wanted Fantasy I would have entered a Fantasy story and relied on the familiar elements that do not need to be explained to carry most of the weight of telling the story.

March these days with current trend to climate extremes is a risky month, a week can see 'typical weather' of January to March leading to a day of sapping heat and humidity or deluge. I think a third Magic casements might be better off taking place during the later and colder months of the year, as it is an indoor event better suited to the weekends that can see the mild and sunny afternoons that Sydney can put on (what about putting it on during the 'Footie' season) . Latter may also be better as this will clear the event free from clashes with post-Clarion-Syndrome and Pre-Natcon writer availability issues.

Summing it all up, I would describe the day as being similar in mood and effect to the Sunday afternoon at a Non-Natcon SF convention, all the really exciting panels and GOH speeches over, an opportunity to hang out with the people that you already know from cons/days past and new people whose names you can't be bothered to find out as the con ends in only a few hours.

I do not know if this entirely fits in with the 'NSW Writers Centre master plan, we will have to see what emerges for 2005.

Does this motivate me to try for a Sydney Science Fiction Weekend later this year? Perhaps? I still think there is a place for a meeting of Science Fiction readers to talk about Science Fiction, and that events like Magic Casements cannot be expected to cover this need.

Wishing you well in all things

Garry P Dalrymple

Notes of the Sydney Futurians meeting of 20 Feb. 2004

Topic – The Best and worst of 2003

Present were; (possibly, from 2003 Futurians list)
Garry P Dalrymple, Diane Fox, John Fox and apologies from Ted Scribner and Brian Walls

Garry's list of bests

Best SF movie – Cypher (not seen, but it was made in Canadia!)

Best Fantasy movie – Return of the King (not seen, I'll wait till it is on TV, like all the other Elvis movies you see on Saturday & Sunday afternoons)

Best Science – Mars rover landings, a welcome return to science looking outward and adventure for the young rather than focus on limitations as with the Space Shuttle crash / unrolling uncertainty over the US Space Station.

Best Light relief Science – Glow in the dark GM fish are currently available at pet shops in Taiwan and California, goes nicely with the glow in the dark mice.

Best Science Fantasy – Raelian Baby Cloning in Sydney (as if!) tied with George Shrub's State of the Union address on going back to the Moon and Manned expedition to Mars (in search of evil dictators and their Weapons of Mars Destruction?)

Best Personal Astronomy – Naked eye visible Sunspots of early November, as shown to fellow OTEN workers by projecting onto a post-it-note using a set of mounted binoculars

Best SF&F Conventions

Would like to say 'ones I ran my self' but each of the following three were each 'bests' for their own reasons.

Speculative Fiction – Magic Casements. Science Fiction – CSF con 2 (over Convergence) as I was able to be more comfortable at this con and was able to feel more like a member than just a minority group ticket holder.

Local SF event - The Sydney Science Fiction Weekend, in spite of the Jury duty issue, I was more able to relax during this one than for the earlier two-day Freecons and I did not get real sick afterwards.

Best Fantasy book read – Terry Pratchett's 'Guards Guards Guards', only Fantasy I can recall intentionally reading during 2003. Not his best work, a fairly mundane treatment of the 'I met and influenced myself in an earlier life', only novelty being that it used Anhk Morpork figures to do this.

Best SF book read – Probable Mirror Dance / Diplomatic Immunity by Lois McMaster Bujold (although I am very conscious that this is heading towards 'SF Romance' now that Miles is married and more settled these days and not the 'Hard SF' that I am supposed to be such a warrior for.)

Longest SF/Fantasy book read during 2003 – Harry Turtledove's 'World War' seven-part Trilogy (and still counting)

Best SF TV – Canadian TV, home and shooting venue for late night anthology SF series, and also occasional SG1 episodes if forced to name a 'mainstream' TV show (2004 episodes apparently feature the return of the ancient three legged Australian / Egyptian god 'Rolf

Horus'). Due to weight of numbers, the currently playing on TV episodes of Dr Who episodes are likely to replace this for 2004.

Best Fantasy TV – Buffy by default due to the climax/final episode, over Angel, which has the opportunity to continue and develop. © Garry P. Dalrymple 20 February 2004.

Notes of the Sydney Futurians meeting of 19 March 2004

Garry's News items

-Progress toward completion of 'A Piece of our Minds' booklet. To date it looks to be about thirty something pages long, with Seven contributors, Four fiction pieces (five pages) Comment and SF events reviews (? pages) meeting notes from six 2003 Sydney Futurian meetings. Project is on track for a Conflux distribution opportunity, authorship increasingly 'non-Garry' each day. About six pages to fill with late submissions and cover design to be completed.

-Magic Casements Flash Fiction entries, four Sydney Futurians (out of seven entrants), three prizes and not one winner? We Wuzz Robbed!

-Ian Woolf's health (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) is taking a turn for the worse

-Zara Baxter is currently editing an issue of ASIM

-Cat Sparks is working on a Conflux issue of AGOG! (I think)

-Ditmar nominations / voting forms out (controversy on Eastcoast SF)

-Erika Maria Lacey, a Brisbane fan, is running for DUFF

-Dr Who seems to be the only Science Fiction on TV at this time.

-Apologies from Ted Scribner, begging off attending in anticipation of the joys of root canal dentistry

- The discovery of Sedna a new very distant 'planet'

-GPD 17 March 2004

With several regulars off sick it is perhaps unsurprising that the advertised topic was 'off' and 'Diseases in SF' substituted by majority vote!

'Diseases in Science Fiction'

An initial problem in discussing this topic was the question of Size. For example Malaria is a disease, a blood parasite carried by mosquitos to humans. It is a

disease, but it is not a germ. Stories abound of parasitic alien creatures that take over people or appear, replicate like crazy and change the World (for better or worse). They reproduce, spread through the population and are bad for you, but are excluded from this discussion on the basis that they are too big. Not discussed was the concept of purely biological 'disease' Vs Man made biological and technological (Prince Charles famous 'Grey Goo' of Nano machines). I guess those damned Nanites were controlling our brain centres again!

Items discussed include:

- In Michael Crichton's The Andromeda Strain – primitive ancient microbes are brought down from the upper atmosphere by a germ warfare program, they bring a death that modern life no longer has resistance to. - GD

- Germs with a natural or rapidly evolved appetite for Rubber seals add a greater element of risk in Michael Crichton's The Andromeda Strain, rendering gas masks and other containment / self protection precautions useless. There are countless examples of the 'rampaging slime' variety that beset the star ship traveller of Space Station resident. - GD

- Story about a mild mannered chap with a puffer pack that likes to hang about airport concourses. Seems that he thinks that Human life is a mistake so he has set himself to spreading the corrective gift of a fatal but long gestation germ. This lead to a brief digression as to how much higher were the costs of the consequences and precautions following the Anthrax powder scares compared to the actual costs and damage actually incurred, everyone we know has had their life affected by scares and precautions of some sort, while the actual death rate toll was only equal to one bad weekend on NSW's roads! - JF

- John Miller Jr Anthology has a disease from space that enhances. The Grey plague causes moist grey skin and an overwhelming compulsion to touch non-sufferers (Whitney Scriber take note?). The disease slightly increases intelligence but raises the sensation of touch to almost orgasmic levels and allows new insights. The disease turns out to have been a gift from an alien civilisation facing extermination by their Star going Nova. They sent off the disease within Russian doll like steel spheres that have been magnetically inscribed with all their civilisation's accumulated knowledge. Other disease stories of this sort exist, but were not quoted. - GD

- Following the above, Diane raised the question of Syphilis, at times known as the 'Poets Disease' as some poets reputedly did their best work while suffering from this disease. It was unclear if there was an actual increase of IQ involved or whether it was just a matter of the relaxation of inhibitions to 'creativity' as the brain's censorship and reality enforcing abilities broke down, allowing for new 'poetic' impressions to be expressed. - DF

- Dr Who features lots of interesting diseases, lately the Ice Warriors nearly conquered Earth through an Oxygen eating (but not water resistant) fungus and shortly we will see the Silurians, back after only 300 million years and planning to re-claim the Earth through their 'Monkey plague' a germ that they developed and used in the past to keep down the numbers of those pesky primates. - GD

- None quoted, but discussed, stories imitating the historical experience of intentional/accidental genocide by 'new' diseases following colonial contact also Medieval Bio-warfare, attempts at fouling the water supply of besieged populations, early 'Prisoner Exchange Programs' - via Trebuchet catapult etc.! DF and JF

- Comet life, unclear if we were talking about books by Greg Bear? Where a human population is landed on Halley's Comet for the duration of a few passes at the Sun or whether we were discussing stories following the Hoyle-Wikramasinge hypothesis that Comets bear viral material that occasionally falls to Earth causing world wide pandemics from Influenza to Polio. - GD, DF and JF.

Reviewing these notes I am surprised that no-one mentioned stories with instances of 'Vampire-like' effects. I think they would qualify under the terms used.

The meeting and discussion ended earlier than usual. John and Diane were both still suffering the consequences of recent ill health and I was a little fuddled after a week of work and the progress of 'APooM' and the prospect of a Market day tomorrow. - GD

Notes from the Sydney Futurian meeting of April 16, 2004

Topic: Dinosaurs and other Primitive Creatures in SF Stories

Present were;

John August, David Bofinger, G. Dalrymple, Diane & John Fox, Ross Mitchell, Ted Scribner and Ian Woolf

Apologies from Brian Walls who is attending a book launch.

General news

- Ian Woolf is feeling much improved, see his Blog for more details - IW

- Likely to be four or more Sydney Futurians at Conflux

- Brian Walls has been attending several SF related book launches at Gleebooks, including a Young Adult 'Steam Engine Cyberpunk' novel. He may provide a review of these events at the next meeting. - GD for RW

- Ross Mitchell has moved house to Ashfield. - RM

- Sold one copy of APooM! - GD

- Sydney Futurian Syllabus card (and other Sydney Lit SF meetings) handed out - GD

- Discussion of PDFs and Browsers - mostly DB & IW

- Background of Magic Casements 1, 2 and 3 was (first Saturday in March 2005) discussed - TS

- Magic Casements 3 will take place on March 05, 2005, the first Saturday in March - TS

- Cat Sparks (AGOG!) has won a trip to the US by achieving third place in the international 'Writers of the Future' competition - TS

- Farscape the four part mini series has just finished filming (what episode was shot in Ted's backyard?) - TS

- The Editorship of Aurealis is vacant - TS

- The Aurealis awards were announced - TS

- The New Zealand SF writer, Russell Kirkpatrick will be in Sydney, appearance dates at SF book shops were read out - TS

- The 2005, Swancon XXX CEO was announced. NB in Perth they have several competing teams vying for the right to hold the year's Swancon - TS

- Approaches have been made to the University of Technology's Student Union to formalize our meeting's status. We need the signatures of four Staff/Union members to become affiliated. - JF

- Publicity and affiliation issues discussed. - JF & IW

- Science Fictional ness of two UTS sections were discussed, 'Mote Research' and Forensics - JF, IW & GD

- Diane Fox has three SF/Fantasy/Horror stories looking for publication (see APooM!) - DF

- Discussion of how difficult it is to join a (SF) writers group - DB

- Friday night meetings of the Sydney Dr Who are taking place at the Landsdowne Hotel, First Friday of the month, \$5 meals available - JA

- Free Double passes to the movie 'The Butterfly Effect' were distributed. The movie is about time travel effects and has had mixed reviews – IW

- 'Astroboy' is back on TV (5.25 pm weekdays ABC), remade for contemporary audiences (what next a 'Gigantor' who talks about his feelings?) – IW

- 'Harvey Birdman at law' (variable but around 9.15 pm Saturdays SBS) is highly recommended, characters are all from comics and cartoons, mostly super heroes and such like having to make their way in 'mundane' life - IW

- 'Greg the Bunny'(11am weekdays channel 7) is worth setting the VCR to catch, peculiar time slot! – IW

- Ian Woolf has received a number of review copies of SF&F books (see his Blog for full details). Three that stand out are Market forces (Br.) by Richard Morgan, Time's Eye by AC Clarke and S. Baxter (a proof copy) and Starfish by Peter Watts. Ian had had dinner with Peter Watts in Toronto (Canada) and having read an earlier book by him, Maelstrom, had the experience 'hearing' the book in it's author's voice as he read the book! – IW

- Recent Australian publications mentioned include, Nylon Angel, Orbital Burn, Forever shores Anthology, Margaret Lanigan's Dark Juice - mostly IW - WW1 veteran Drag Queen Commandos Go Down on Nazi Rocket men! – John August introduced this claim stating that this was discussed at a Canberra SF convention. David Bofinger proceeded to pull the wings off this claim. It emerged that there might have been some discussion of a case where SOE commandos who had been 'too old' for regular military enlistment, dressed in women's clothing in order to get closer when attacking a V2 launching site. - JA and DB (usually Brian Walls supplies these moments at our meetings)

-The current issue of Interstellar Ramjet Scoop (An ANZAPA newsletter Edited by Bill Wright) has an article by John August – JA

Onto the topic

Discussion of this topic fell into two halves, with a decision to take the Dinosaurs first and to do the 'Primitives' part of the topic second, so first:

Dinosaurs in SF

Dragons and Fantasy stories were ruled to be out, due to the volume and frequency of animals in this genre that could be argued to be Dragons and or Dinosaurs depending on context. Simplified down to Science Fiction only, the following notes were recorded.

- Time travel and Robots in Small Deer, UFOs turn up and abduct all dinosaurs, resulting in their apparent 'extinction'.

- The thing in the stone, a head injury allows time travel (to where the Dinosaurs are)

- A major theme is of instances of time travel to the past where momentary interaction puts in train the events that lead to their extinction.

Other major types of Dinosaur stories include:

1. Genetic Revival (Jurassic Park) from fossil or other preserved remains
2. Dinosaurs shipped off planet (by aliens and to be encountered by human space explorers)
3. Alien Worlds where native life just happened to be big and lizard like
4. Dinotopia and Fred Flintstone, where Dinosaurs and humans co-exist
5. 'Lost World' Dinosaurs A la Conan Doyle, discovery of a remote or inaccessible place where they neglected to die out

6. Reversions of modern animals (and people) to a primitive state, i.e. the Canary to a T. Rex that occurred in Red Dwarf

7. Dinosaurs in a story for no particular reason

8. Dinosaurs as stand in allegorical animals, i.e. in Anne McCaffery's Decision at Doona, 'Golden Intelligent Flyers' standing in for Dragons?

- David Bofinger mentioned that The Space Child's mother goose, features Nursery rhyme parodies using SF themes and images, which lead to a discussion of SF Poems! And inevitably the sordid practice of 'Filking'

- Robert Heinlien's Glory Road contains a 'scientific' explanation of how Dragons

- Stephen Baxter's Evolution has dinosaurs

- Tolkien has non-igniting 'Coal Drakes' as Dinosaurs

- David Bofinger mentioned Komodo Dragons (don't touch) that kill those who they have bitten by blood poisoning due to their lack of dental hygiene. They also seem to hunt in packs and allegedly have toxic to touch skin (don't stroke the lizard, as the Pope would say?). Much general chat about Dinosaur habits, lifestyle and 'end off', blame the history channel!

- Trogodont, small predator Dinosaurs that hunted in packs had half litre brains (how much is that in Bushes?) in time would this have lead to Space Travel and an Asteroid War?

- Harry Harrison's West of Eden (and sequel?) are set in an alternate history where the Dinosaurs were not wiped out. Also no 'Humans' in these books, the 'human like'

people are actually descended from South American monkeys, not African apes

- Cosmonaut Keep by Ken McLeod features technological Dinosaurs with spacecraft etc. as the 'Greys' of UFO folklore!

- Ted Scribner insisted on raising the Loch Ness Monster and Sea Serpents in an entirely transparent attempt to be able to remind us that he is the local agent for the Glasgow Worldcon.

- Katelet Kearnan? has a story about intelligent life at the time preceding the Permian Extinction event i.e. Trilobite time, very pre-dinosaur, Burgess Shale and the Cambrian Explosion in the same conversation

Primitive Life in SF

This we did not do so well, the problem being that Primitive is a self excluding category i.e. a Coelacanth Fish looks like a real primitive fish, but as it is alive today it is 'modern' and 'complex' as it is able to successfully compete for a biological niche. A stumbling point was the Andromeda Strain. Sure we are told that the infective agent was 'old' but does that mean it was necessarily primitive? After all, it was able to adapt to infecting humans. A definition of 'primitive' as being less complicated, smart or less sophisticated was accepted.

Carol Kapec's The Salamanders, intelligent Amphibian 'Tapa Boys' are exploited but soon rise to take over the Earth (and the Sea!)

All fish descend from land animals (was claimed by DB) a flow cladistic diagram was produced to demonstrate this.

See 'Tree of Life' web site www.tol.org

Cladistics, 'most primitive' identifiable as first branch to peel off the mainstream

Characters of Primitive Culture in SF Stories?

Atavistic behaviour of characters in SF Stories, reversion to the primitive?

A discussion of Pemulwy and his war against the British in Parramatta lead to a side discussion of **Great Smoking Eels**, about some Victorian Aboriginals, circa 6,000 BC to 1820 AD who had villages, feudal land ownership and trading routes and then the Caledonians arrived! Seen on ABC TV Catalyst etc. This evening ended at 9.06 pm. See you at Conflux!

The following are notes I prepared in advance of the meeting but was unable to find on the night. There is considerable overlap with what was discussed, but I have added them to the end of the meeting notes as I think they do a better job of covering the 'Primitive' part of the topic, as I took an approach that was different to

that of the meeting. Of course I also had more time to piece them together in an orderly sequence.

- GD

Garry's pre-prepared notes on the topic: Dinosaurs and Primitive Creatures in Science Fiction Stories

Only bad things seem to happen in these stories, Big creatures go bad, primitive creatures thwart the plans and schemes of men. The message is 'don't mess with the past' or that survival of the fittest does not care for 'high' civilisations.

Overturing of the mighty by the least occurs frequently.

Things to consider ruling out

Disease stories – 'Big Animal' stories - Time travel stories where changing the past leads to a changed present

Things to consider

How big is a dinosaur as opposed to 'Giant Animal' stories. How old is primitive? Or is it a matter of 'simple' organisation (compared to what?).

My Story Types

- 1 – Time travel stories where encounters with ancient creatures form most of the plot
- 2 – Travel to a distant or inaccessible place where a remanent ecosystem maintains dinosaurs etc.
- 3 – Man's intervention (atomic) disturbs the earth and brings back to life dormant ancient life forms
- 4 – Reversion of modern forms to ancient and deadly predecessors due to science or accident
- 5 – Stories of conflict over the possession of the valuable remains of ancient creatures
- 6 – Necromancy, raising the 'Old Ones' by magic
- 7 – Time travel that brings back unanticipated passengers that adapt too well to the modern world
- 8 – Stories where Mankind and Technology are brought down by some simple life form
- 9 – Primitive men bring down spaceships etc.

Some Examples of stories that fit the topic?

Mars Attacks (the book that was a sequel to the Movie)
– The Martians are halted and almost defeated by a Mongol tribesman with a Ghengis Khan fixation, his traditional weapons being undetectable to Martian technology.

King David's Spaceship (by somebody) – Medieval peasants on the pilgrimage to Canterbury / a Crusade, are underestimated by blue skinned aliens and they end up capturing first a space ship and then the alien's home world.

Harry Turtledove's World War Trilogies – Aliens assume that the primitive (AD1200) Earthlings that they have records of will be a pushover, having failed to consider consequences of 800 years of human technological progress and interminable human conflict.

Red Dwarf – the episode where a canary 'reverts' to being a T. Rex

Carol Capek's The Salamanders – Bunch of dinosaur era intelligent Salamanders isolated until discovered on a remote Pacific Island, enslaved as a cheap work source, they soon revolt and take over the world.

HG Wells' War of the World's – Earth's primitive germs bring down the mighty and highly evolved Martians where human technology has failed.

The Omega Man – Germs get loose (but is this necessarily ancient or primitive life at work?), almost every body dies.

Pierre Boule's? Planet of the Apes - Nuclear war clears man out of the way, allowing the more 'primitive' apes their chance of World dominance?

A story with an Assassin's Guild, they own a fossilised and highly valuable 'Impicator' Skeleton, an extinct five legged dinosaur type creature.

Michael Crichton's The Andromeda Strain – primitive ancient microbes brought down from the upper atmosphere bring death that modern life has no immunity for and his Jurassic Park – Dinosaurs brought back to life for fun and profit, then they break loose.

Jules Verne's A Journey to the Centre of the Earth - A quest story that encounters earth's past at the centre of the Earth.

Gojira (and many sequels) – Atomic tests wake the sleeping monsters, Tokyo gets trashed again.

Edgar Rice Burrough's 'Pellucida' stories – Ancient world at the centre of the Earth for Tarzan like adventures.

Many X-Files stories feature something old being dug up, with lethal consequences.

Darwin's Radio by Greg Bear, Homo Sapiens are the new primitives as a new more advanced human type emerges.

Notes ahead of the Sydney Futurian meeting of Friday 18 June, 2004

Topic : 'Pornography, Android and Virtual Sex in SF'

Garry's News

- 'Tru Calling's multiple theme borrowing, see my email to Eidolist.
- A positive and encouraging review of ApooM! Received from Donna Hanson (via Ted Scribner) the CEO Conflux.
- In the current Skeptic magazine there is a story about automatic writing 'inspired' by three spirits, which is claimed to be 'evidence' of a liking for 'Science Fiction'. I plan to reply to this!
- In the current issue of the Skeptic there is a picture of John August down a drain, part of a story about cave clan activities in Melbourne?
- Feedback on my proposed survey form, a part of the attempt to start a Bankstown SF group.
- My Transit of Venus report
- My email is; Garry.Dalrymple@det.nsw.edu.au and my new workplace is at the Bankstown Civic Tower building.

Questions to be asked, Exclusions?

- Pornographic SF or occasions when Pornography is referred to in SF?
- Sex, presumably copulation and reproduction rather than just 'gender'?
- 'Bionic bits' and machine enhanced /assisted pleasure?
- Substitute pleasures in the absence of partners?
- Sex of the mind, without bodily contact?
- Societies without personal contact
- Do we exclude 'casual sex' interludes in stories

Some thoughts

- The presumptive Star Trek glove box model 'universal adaptor' that allows unrestricted cross species sex.

- Do we rule out 'Brave New World' type stories where reproduction is mechanized and institutional, sexual freedom or withdrawal of the human touch?
- AC Clarke Story where the first Geosynchronous Satellites are organized by a syndicate specifically to broadcast pornography across state borders.
- Alien complaints about the 'pornographic' Voyager images (i.e. offended by the sight of uncovered FEET)
- 'Pornography' as part of the background scenery of a story. Serving to demonstrate that that society has reached a decadent 'end' state.
- The 'Consensual' anthology of sexual SF from the people behind the Swancon SF conventions (I think).
- The 'Void' anthology, a booklet produced ahead of Aussiecon 1 (or 2) containing sexual SF?
- The published works of 'Kilgore Trout', as described by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. which are only published in the 'pornographic magazines' that are sold on racks at (US) drugstores instead of 'real' bookstores.
- One of Isaac Asimov's books with Daneel Olivaw as the Detective's assistant, following Caves of Steel ? with a murder taking place on a world with extreme personal contact taboos, and settled with one person per house per 100km property, raised by robots etc. Virtual sex and bushwalking are implied. Was Daneel Olivaw 'boffing' his human mistress and does this conflict with the three laws of robotics?
- The four Aliens movies, which are all about sex. The aliens wanting our bodies for sex, the exchange of genetic data and the reproduction / evolution of it's species.
- The 'BEM' as depicted on pulp era covers, always wanting to get its tentacles on barely clad space girls for what obvious purpose!
- In 'Wetware' by Rudy Rucker (one of a series) a civilization develops among petaflop 'bopper' robots living on the Moon. They have bypassed their 'Asimov' programming and are evolving away on their own without human control. They make their own offspring by combining and merging their accumulated software and some of them want to download their software into DNA and make human / robot (meat bopper) hybrid babies.
- The movie 'Demon Seed' where a computer impregnates a woman.
- Stories where the SETI message received is translated into DNA i.e. the two 'Species' movies.
- Movies like 'Cherry 3000', 'Stepford Wives', 'Dr Someone and the Girl Bombs', each about android marriage / sex partners, central to the plot, each story has a 'moral'. 'Morals' and alt sex, a common theme?
- Borg sex is this Human, Alien or Other?

- The sex life of Data as seen in some STNG episodes.
 - Short story by Harlan Ellison, a famous and beautiful Zero Gee ballet artist, with multiple husbands. Birth sex is male, but this is no barrier to physical side of relationships, just dial up your preferred gender of the occasion and unstated artificial interfaces take over.
 - Rithistra, sex with other species, on Larry Niven's Ringworld a means of contraception given the species divergences. Also with Cordwainer Smith's animal derived 'Under people' stories, specifically, The Ballad of Lost C'Mell, a cat derived girly-girl available for sexual purposes.
 - A short story of a Florida swamp species that 'mimics' the comely Indian maiden, mates with you and in a drugged haze your body serves to pupate it's young.
 - Once saw a movie where they were finally about to introduce 'perfected' android sex substitutes, 'humour' of the film was that the robot women turned out to be as emotionally demanding as real women.
 - Parthenogenesis, hybridization produces 'girls' who have pre-fertilized eggs. Without the presence of males of their species they can give birth to a lineage of their own daughter 'clones', reproductive method of choice for many Pacific island lizard species and some Turkeys. Surely this counts as 'Other'
- © Garry P Dalrymple June 16, 2004

The Monday July 5, 2004 meeting of the Sydney City Stargazers (formerly the meeting of the NSW Branch of the BAA)

I arrived shortly after 6.30, later than I had planned, having caught a delayed train from Bankstown, so I had to make the Circular Quay to Sydney Observatory walk at maximum speed. This trip is mostly vertical, involving a lot of stairways through the back streets of the rocks, from sea level to Observatory hill's heights !

The group had already moved off into the South dome where the 11 inch refractor was being prepared to view Jupiter.

The group consisted of a bit over a dozen people, several of them being the unfamiliar faces, possibly members who had not been able to make the Wednesday night meetings, several committee members and my Brother, Sister-in-law and Niece (a School Holiday treat?). The view through the Refractor was disappointing, seeing conditions were poor with the

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