

# *Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment*

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## Editorial - Don't Count on it!

This issue is going out without mailing comments and has been printed / posted much earlier than the due date to catch the next ANZAPA mailing. Partly this is because I believe that holding back until September and publishing July, August and September Fanac and Science reports and all that would result in another post person herniating issue (see the length of the July Futurians report), partly I want to clear some space to organize Freecon and Futurian matters. Have a look at my coverage of the July 15 Futurian meeting and see what I mean.

As I have Original Fiction 'to burn', possibly in excess of forty stories, I might also try to do something about doing these as well, I have tried some of them on people at work and they think they are good.

The major thing is that there has been an up tick interest in Futurian matters. So I am motivated to try to get reports done very soon after meetings, which I can do now that I have full weekends most weeks! and then posted / published first in the ANZAPA mode so I am free to then send text to 'Specusphere' and the Futurians Bulletin Board for the rest of the universe to enjoy. This might result in some between mailings TBS&E' i.e. receiving my 15th and 16th in mailing #227, 17th and 18th in mailing #228. But **don't count on it.**

Garry Dalrymple – 29 August 2005, 16,258 words

## Quark, Strangeness and Charm in Sydney?

### 'White Star One'

For some months there has been a discount whitegoods shop operating in the Clemton Park shopping centre. The guy keeps late hours, so I have come across him receiving or despatching deliveries late into the night as I get off the bus, return from meetings in town. The name above the shop is 'White Star One' and I have been meaning to ask why, 'White Star One' being the name of the Flagship of the Rangers fleet, from Babylon 5. The guy was quite happy to explain it to me. His family name (in Persian?) translates as 'White Star' so six years ago he went to register it as a business name. However, his agent amended it without consultation to 'White Star One', instead of say 'White Star Discounts' or 'White Star Electrical bargains' etc and so he's stuck with it. I didn't feel it was a good time to raise the SF nal references of his shop's name.

The Caged Children of Bankstown!

Early July is a NSW School holiday break, so of late when walking through the Bankstown Vulgardrome Shopping Mall I have been pleased to see large numbers of small children caged behind steel.

### **What a good idea!**

They should do this all year round, stops the little imps getting underfoot all the time. I discovered this week that they were only briefly penned ahead of meeting 'Bob the Builder', a costumed character in imitation of the children's TV figure. How disappointing, must sent a letter to the Mayor of Bankstown, the young are a threat to us all you know.

### **By the light of a full Moon, Or underneath the Scientology Volcano**

On the bus trip into the city for the Sydney City Skywatchers dinner, while the bus was stationary on George Street outside the Movie houses I saw an incident. Across the street from the Scientology 'Big Volcano' (and what exactly did Tom Cruise and his religion have to say about the recent 'Super Volcano' documentary Drama?) a shoeless, (homeless?) scruffy looking young chap (15 to 25 years of Age?) was haranguing the movie going crowd with some intensity and not surprisingly being ignored and avoided by the surging throng intent on a good night out. He ended up by throwing things at the crowd (hitting at least two young Asian people) before walking out into the (slow) traffic and taking his point of view elsewhere.

I don't know if he was targeting Asian people, or whether it was just that as the Movie strip in Sydney is between a herd of high rise tower blocks (favoured by Asian students) and the Dixon Street / 'China Town' restaurant strip, there were Asian people present in volume and that in the Saturday Night bustle, they probably were unaware in that this guy was chucking a mental (in English presumably). As you can see, a splendid tribute to our 'Open Air', de-institutionalized Housing and Mental Health policies, as opposed to our 'Lock em All Up' and send them away, refugee policies.

My principled stand on all this was to impotently telepathically urge the driver to - 'Struth, Close that bloody bus door now, before the loony sees the chance and climbs on board!'

### **Strangeness is where you look for it, Private Advantage on Public Transport?**

On the morning of July 28 I was waiting at the bus stop for a bus to Campsie where I catch the train to Bankstown. Way up the road, a full bus stop city ward, there was some sort of a car accident. We did not see

it happen, as bottle brush trees planted beside the footpath block the view, but on climbing into the 400 bus we got to see that a car had 'T-boned' another car or a truck as it tried to pull off the main road and into a driveway or Clemton Avenue.

Unfortunate, but not peculiar, until I noticed that the bus was filling up with a herd of Private School girls, three at least three uniforms six to eight girls. In addition to a retired folk and workers, there was just one Private School boy. Why the gender imbalance? Is there some male toxic stuff in the local water?

While waiting for the 412 or the 400 to Campsie we usually see the two or three bus 'Newington' (A Boy's school specializing in Woodwork, Same-sex Sex offences, Bastardization and out of court settlements - apparently) collection fleet passing by. The boys on board are bussed up from 'The Shire', South of Sydney and they are usually screaming and carrying on with great energy. Surely the first lesson of the morning must be lost on these boys, as they arrive at school in a 'hyperactive' state of mind?

At Campsie, just past the Railway Station there are separate designated collection bus stops for the Boys and the Girls schools. They are on either side of a corner and considerable interaction takes place as they loiter for possibly the best part of an hour each day?

I am reminded that the devil finds work for idle hands. What degree of false illusions do the parents of these children suffer under in seeking to send their kids to these single sex Private schools?

Separation of the genders through single sex schooling?  
Not Bloody Likely.

### **The Telekinetic Wheely Bins of Sydney - Update?**

I sent a letter to the Lord Mayor of Sydney to ask for an explanation and or re-capture of the feral Wheely bins of Observatory Park. The result of this to date has been ..... nothing. Then I went to my P.O. box after 3 weeks out of action due to a cold and found .....

Well read it yourself in the green pages, a much better reply than from Ex Sydney Lord Mayor 'Uncle Frank' Sartor who refused to have a cup of tea with me Mum!

### **ANZAPA or to Blog?**

The following is part of an email exchange with Rod McLeod, a Sydney fan that I recently sent some back issues of TBS&E.

After having read through your ANZAPA contributions, I can only say I admire the

breadth of your knowledge in Astronomy and SF in general. As an official cat person, I have no personal or emotional link with dogs, but you are certainly out there with the Basenji passion. The Skeptics content was interesting, too. I also agree with your general assessment of Andromeda (ASIM), although the magazine has a clear aim of being light and entertaining. The science-based SF does not get much of a look in then.

Even with a lot of the work done at Bankstown, I am still surprised by the volume material that you write. The interesting thing is that what you are producing seems like a paper version of a weblog. All these personal details would now be put on the web. All these bloggers are out there doing daily ANZAPAs.

Thanks for the effort and expense in getting these issues over to me. I enjoyed going through the material, although I do not have your spare time and my reading is far less than yours.

See you around at Con Syder, when that happens. - Rod McLeod

My Reply

The trick Rod, is to have a Basenji, soooo much less time spent in bathing and grooming ect. Time that you can spend on reading SF / fanac.

Even just walking the Basenji to the PO box can be fanac multi-tasking!  
You can't do that with a cat!

Going a Blogging is something that I have deep reservations about.

What you see in a copy of TBS&E are several whacks at organising bits of text, usually spread over four to six weeks of 5 to 7 pm nights after work, 6 to 12 pm nights at home or Saturday mornings (now that I don't do Glebe Markets). A problem that I have had is coherence, i.e. what I'm raving on about in the third 'whack' may not have much to do with what I was raving on about in the first or last 'whack's.

To do a daily (or weekly) Blog would require editing down the breadth of what I cover in a copy of TBS&E AND I only have to reply to other ANZAPAN (32 members and about 16 contributors each mailing) every eight to twelve weeks. I would be simply run of my feet if I was to be in any way responsive to daily enquiries/feedback coming back from a Blog. Also a more frequent (than six times a year) TBS&E Blog or probably more appropriately a Blue Pages Blog, a Golden Pages Blog and a Green pages Blog would be more 'whacks' than I could enjoy putting into it. I.e. if I took it seriously I would disappear from Fandom by crossing a Blog shaped event horizon and be trapped by a Blog singularity!

The other reservation is that paper publication imposes some unit length discipline, without this I would probably tend more toward 'War and Peace' length episodes, and who would want to read all that much about my 'adventures'.

**Elizabeth Pastor** has started attending Sydney Futurian meetings. If she attends this Friday I will pass on to her your regards.

I might discuss with Elizabeth just posting/re-publishing unedited copies of TBS&E issues as website content after the date of paper publication, without the full interactivity.

If you really appreciate TBS&E, nominate it for a Ditmar ahead of each Natcon, people beyond ANZAPA asking for 'e' or paper review copies would be an encouragement!

Garry P Dalrymple

## Blue pages, Science & Astronomy

Cosmos Magazine Presents: Science on tap, 'A beginners Guide to Immortality' With Stephen Leeder, Mark

## Jones and Ian Woolf, Level 3, Forrester's Hotel, 336 Riley Street, Thursday 7 July, 2005

On this night there were three meetings I could/should have attended, the Infinitas Bookshop SF discussion meeting at Parramatta, a TAMS meeting and this event. Looking at Street directories I noticed that Riley Street was just behind the Australian Museum, so it decided me that Parramatta was 'out' and I would try if possible to attend TAMS then leave and catch the tail end of the Immortality talk.

Walking in from Museum station and arriving at the Australian Museum before 5.30 pm for a 6.30 pm event and with an hour to kill, I decided that I would try to measure the distance to 336 Riley Street by walking there, saying 'hello' before it started and then walking back with plenty of time for the TAMS event.

I started walking, flat at first and then up hill. 40 minutes later finally reached the Forrester very much out of puff at 6.05 pm. I had time for a few minutes of chat and then back to TAMS and it still felt like up hill all the way. The hotel was way South and East of Central Station, not just behind the Australian Museum! So at 6.15 pm I was on my way again, arriving just in time to catch the crowd moving in for the light supper ahead of the TAMS talk. This hour of up hill walking was much more energetic exercise than I get when taking mystique for an hour long ramble.

So, who did I see at 'Science on Tap' during my brief stay, that I could put a name to, well several Sydney Futurians and effectively a subcommittee of the 'Sydney in 91' Worldcon bid! – David Bofinger, Wilson da Silva, Peter Eisler, Brigid Mullane, Sarah Murray-White, Richard Saunders (Australian Skeptics) and Ian Woolf.

When I got to the TAMS meeting I was also surprised to meet two of the committee members of the Sydney City Skywatchers – Secretary Elizabeth Cocking, Editor Janette Brennan (and her husband) and Brad Row, host of the Southern SF & Fantasy group meetings – Small World!

The following are my notes from Ian Woolf's report to the Sydney Futurians:

- There was a last minute substitution for the panel, Elizabeth Finkel who researches Stem Cells, which worked out well.

- Hydrogen Sulphide gas (H<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>) can be used to make non-hibernating rats hibernate (and smell better?).
- Dogs have had their blood drained, replaced by saline and 'stored' at Bush IQ temperatures for hours before blood was re-introduced and revival, apparently without ill effect. Lead to popular press speculation of 'Zombie Dogs' (no pet cemetery needed Mr King). Has implications for road accident / battle trauma injuries, kill'em, chill'em and re-fill'em?
- Developments like this have caused the medical definition of 'death' to be frequently revised. David Bofinger offered the traditional naval definition of death for burial at sea, needle and thread through the nose before enshrouding.
- Reversatrol (or something sounding like this) is really good for keeping you alive longer in test animals, found in Red Wine and Dark Chocolate (just like Vitamin 'Ch?'). I was able to offer that significant part of Gladys' (who made it to nearly 99) diet was chocolate and her trademark 'pink drink'.
- The retirement age of 65 was chosen by German Chancellor Otto Von Bismark as a retirement age for workers to aspire to. At that time, in practice very few workers would reach that age.
- The audience for the night roughly split into two factions, people who thought longer was better and those who thought current life span is enough.
- 85 years of age was a consensus date for life span, half for more, half felt that this was about enough.
- The 'Enough' faction thought that everyone should die by when they did, the 'Longer' faction would leave it to individual.

## The Tsunami and Sydney, a long-term relationship

Speaker, Dr Edward Bryant from the University of Wollongong, Notes from an Australian Museum Society meeting on the evening of July 7, 2005

In Australia and elsewhere most people know that Tsunami are caused by volcanic stuff, and as there's not much of that happening in Australia, why bother worrying about it? - Well, not quite.

The worldview of Tsunami phenomena is dominated by the North Pacific experience, the Ring of Fire volcanic

events which affect the large populations of the Northern Pacific Rim countries. But there are two other significant causes of Tsunamis, Rocks from the Sky and landslides / Submarine Subsidence of sediments. These remain as an issue to the South Pacific, and, as well, the Australian East Coast is also exposed to some tsunami risk from the volcanically active regions of New Zealand and South American.

Dr Bryant lives near Wollongong, at an altitude of 9.2 metres above sea level and some 800 metres from the sea. A second row seat for Tsunamis as it will emerge! He got into Tsunamis through looking at coastal features and sediment deposits. His journey of discovery started at Adcock point where he noticed a jumbled deposit of mixed sand and rock that could only be left by Tsunami like action. He was to look further and soon found deposits on top of 130 metre headlands, suggestive of 60 metre waves hitting beaches. He found coastal landforms, piles of house sized boulders dumped in bays behind headlands. Boulder fields on headland slopes piled up facing away from the direction where massive waves had come from. He found metre thick bands of marine sands 10 km inland and saw coastal rocks eroded in a way that suggests they were done in minutes by immense rock carrying vortices. These left him with a view that many characteristics of the Australian coast may be best explained as being caused by Tsunami actions.

The 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami involved the raising of 30 to 80 thousand square kilometres of sea bed. The PNG wave which killed 2206 people, had a 15 metre high wave as it crossed the beach and was caused by a landslip initiated by a much smaller quake. The Australian Continental shelf is covered in unstable river deposited sediment and 177 landslide scars have been identified on the NSW coast alone, dates of occurrence unclear. In 1991, Dr Bryant's son returned home white faced. Standing on the beach dunes, just as he was going for a swim, he had seen a wave roll up and clear the beach. A Tsunami source unknown (in the 1960s during a childhood holiday at Umina, an ocean front beach, I also observed a 'peculiar' crest-less wave that just surged up the beach a metre or two, into the area where people had umbrellas and towels etc.). Small slips and Tsunamis are common, 25.4 % observed in the Pacific, 74.6% in the rest of the world. Non-Volcanic places can still be devastated, i.e. the 1755 Tsunami associated with the Lisbon earthquake, killed thousands. Seattle is the most at risk place for Tsunami. Tsunami sources include Indonesia, Japan,

South America, Alaska and New Zealand and Chile, both of which are overdue a 'big one'.

### What Tsunamis do

The Boxing Day event in Banda Aceh was recorded as a 50 cm high surge at Fort Denison (Sydney Harbour) and registered on every tide gauge in the world. All observed Tsunamis effects happen in water that is less than 20 metres deep. The Run up height i.e. wet ground Vs observed wave height is usually about 3 times the height of wave crest. The distance travelled inland by water can be great where nothing much stands in the Tsunamis way i.e. evidence of inundation deposits as far inland as Richmond and Windsor in the Sydney basin. Tsunamis entering a harbour can go round and round for hours causing great damage, will go over headlands and up cliff faces, will travel cross country through gullies, clearly 'views' kill!

Parts of Wollongong are greatly at risk, particularly with anticipated sea level changes, as the housing commission folk were settled low and close to the then unappreciated coast South of Sydney.

Mega Tsunamis signature effects can include Depositional effects can include huge piles of house sized rocks piled pointing to the direction of the Tsunamis origin as well as Quartz, boulders and sand piled up on top of 40 metre headlands and 'boneyard' boulder fields dumped in bays in the shadow of inundated headlands. This was illustrated by a circa 1500 AD boulder dump. Extreme erosion effects, deep carvings effects seen in the coastal landforms include the Kiama Blow hole (a Tsunamis carved sea cave) and other features around Wollongong. In the Shoalhaven area there is a sea sand deposit 10 km inland and 40 cm thick (much thicker than that left by the Boxing bay Tsunamis).

Sydney Harbour is littered with Tsunamis effects, North Head has a collapsed cliff race, the near Prince Henry Hospital golf course is a Tsunamis deposit field and at South Head there are jumbled displaced boulders.

The Study of Tsunamis that can be dated, from carbon dating of organic matter in strata, suggests four Tsunamis peaks every 2520 years, which seems to match predictions of meteor impacts arising from the source of the Taurid meteor shower. I.e. Tollman's Meteor impact, which occurred about 7,000 years before the present resulted from a seven-piece comet impact. Undersea craters have been detected which would have lead to NSW coast affecting Tsunamis activity. Comet and Meteor observations from China and Japan suggest

a year 1500 peak and from New Zealand there are Maori stories of the Fires of Tamaatea. A devastating event with legends of a Big Bang, Fire – Steam – Waves and Heavy Rains, that has left datable evidence (burnt wood) and is typical of what you would expect following a comet impact. There are also several Australian Aboriginal stories documented events likely to be observations of Comets and distant impacts.

### Some additional points raised during a Questions and Answers session

Government modelling of potential Tsunamis damage to Australian cities suggest that the risk of loss of life is not great. Wollongong University is working on big picture and wide scale view of potential Tsunamis effects rather than localized effects. Tsunamis come in trains rather than as a single wave front as seen in Hollywood movies, a rising tide rather than a surfable curled wave. The proposed Pacific tide gauge / ocean height measuring network may give a 2 to 3 hour warning of Tsunamis impact. Possibly it is time for the risk averse to 'Sea Change' to the inland

## Garry's Observations

I've not been well of late. A three week cold has cut down my interest in nocturnal perambulations, SF and Astronomy meetings missed during July and Early August. The following are mostly 'bus stop' observations, things seen between Sunset and the arrival of the 412 bus that drops me 50 metres from home.

**Moon and Planets** – on the evenings of August 7, 8, 9 and 10 the **Crescent (New) Moon** and the Planets **Venus** and **Jupiter** put on quite a good show. On the seventh the crescent moon at 5 pm EST was thin but seemed asymmetrical through very clear skies. On **the evening of Sunday the eighth** the Moon and Venus were side by side, about one Moon's diameter separated, suggesting the possibilities for some electronic camera jiggery pokery to produce a celestial smiley to anticipate the safe return of the Space Shuttle and it's crew. On **the evening of Monday the ninth** the Moon was equidistant from and in a straight line with both Jupiter and Venus. On **the night of the tenth**, the Moon and Jupiter passed within on Lunar Diameter. Damn shame I have been so unwell, as there were many clear and nearly moonless nights of late.

## Sydney City Skywatchers (SCS) Annual Dinner, Held

## on the evening of Saturday 23 July, 2005

### *Present were;*

*Mary Ann Arnott, Janette and Michael Brennan Elizabeth Budek, Michael Chapman (SCS President), Elizabeth Cocking, Garry Dalrymple, Alan and Mrs Plummer, Shirley Rae, Harry Roberts, Monty and Rosa Leventhal, Nick and Madeline Lomb, the committee plus a few extra.*

### General Business

There was no business, as it was a purely social event.

Essentially I had been in bed since Wednesday night (the SCS Committee meeting) with a throat dwelling cold, but I rugged up and went in to this night's dinner as I had been a co-sponsor of the proposal and the an expansion of the social aspect of our Astronomy Association is a very necessary thing to our long term survival. I just missed the right 423 bus and ended up spending from 6. 15 pm to 6.55 pm standing in the cold, counting the minutes until the dinner's kick off time (7 for 7.30) and watching the local Catholic Community assemble for their evening service.

The bus ride in was fairly routine, people in their Saturday night clothes getting on and off as the bus passed several 'Eat Streets' and Railway stations as it passed from inner west suburbia to the inner city and finally the Sydney CBD. I got off the bus at Bridge Street, a stop or two short of Circular Quay, at a bit after 7.35 pm, late but not egregiously so.

From the safety of the bus, I observed a worrying incident, near the George Street Cinema complex, which you will find described in the Quark Strangeness and Charm section of this issue.

While the incident was taking place, I also noticed that there was a person wandering around in the background, in front of the shopfronts for the Cinemas and the attached in-house Fast Food outlets. She was carrying a sign on a stick. The sign advertised '\$5 Steaks', a genuine 'door buster' offer available at the pub across the road, which is designed by enlightened pub management coax people to enter the pub to eat and to sink a few beers etc. I will file that for future reference, now that NSW pubs are 'one smoking room only'. A Movie and a \$5 Steak on a half price Tuesday seems very tempting, much better value than a Movie and \$6 worth of McNasty burger and chips for afters!

After a brisk and 'warming' 10 minute walk from Bridge Street, I was seated at Camino's, the restaurant for the dinner. I was the last to arrive. I had been momentarily delayed as, as I walked past, the police were setting up barricades, re-directing traffic and blocking off the Rocks precinct's main street. I was very surprised to discover how close Camino's was to the paths I usually take when leaving meetings at the Observatory.

My first impression on taking a seat was that there were close to twenty people attending, SCS members and rather pleasingly a number of member's partners. We were all seated at two or three tables joined together and seated outside under propane burners and several different forms of outdoor lighting, some 'Hot' metal filament floodlights? Not a Star or planet was visible in the restricted view of the night sky that we had from under the propane burner and the market umbrella canopies.

Consider the Green house gas and Light pollution implications of that lot, in a part of town already over illuminated from the streetlights directly above? Electric Infra Red heating or closer to the table lighting may have been more efficient at providing comfortable heating and light?

Very early on we all noticed that several rectangular notches had been cut into the nearly vertical rock face that enclosed the 'backyard' of the restaurant. They looked like sockets for beams for stairs or washing lines or something. On a trip to visit the loo I discovered that there were in fact plenty of vacant small tables inside. On the way back to the table I investigated the stairways.

They lead up the side of the rock face, and as a sort of a park I found the remains of a dwelling that was half cut into the rock face, with brick courses above the room shaped pits cut into the sandstone. There were several fireplaces cut into the sandstone as well which were now illuminated for effect. An interesting effect displayed in an eye catching way.

As the Moon was particularly close that evening and its gravitational effects were at a maximum, I gave out a number of Gravity affected dreidles. You spin then and then if circumstances are right, they flip over and spin 'upside down' on their spindles for a little while.

I also handed out an Observatory & Rocks Postcards to each individual or couple, and to document the event I dug out of my bag and circulated two of the large Sydney Observatory Picture cards (I originally bought these ahead of the 1990 BAANSW Branch Dinner), to collect the names and signatures of those present for the dinner.

One copy was for me and one copy to go into the Astronomy Association's archives together with the usual photographs.

The House wine was described as 'Ghastly' and sent back, with muttered comments to the effect that it had left the cat warm, but had chilled while waiting to be served!

The service seemed slow and inattentive, which at least allowed plenty of time for conversation. Possibly the problem is that waitstaff are relatively cheap compared to efficient and skilled kitchen staff, low wage rates encouraging or tolerating poor management practice? There was also a Harp and Guitar duo wandering around, staying for a few minutes to play a sort of Sicilian Mariachi music before wandering off to another part Comino's to repeat the procedure. Ever the culinary adventurer, I ordered a \$20 plate of Spaghetti Bolognese as a main course. Still suffering from a cold I wasn't expecting to eat up big. The Spaghetti Bolognese would have been \$18 as an Entrée and I suspect it would have been a much longer and vastly more expensive evening if I had gone the full hog of Wine, Entree, Main desert and Liqueurs.

### Incidental conversation

I spoke about the Navy, Sci-Fi conventions and Dr Who with **Elizabeth Budek**, about current Sci-Fi TV and the upcoming Serenity (Firefly) movie to **Elizabeth Cocking**, US and Australian Science Fiction Magazines, Lighting and Heating with **Alan Plummer**, and about Music to his wife, who is also a professional Musician.

As I was seated at one end of the table, after finishing my main course and while other people were waiting for their deserts and coffee to be served I went up the other end of the table where I was able to talk to the **Leventhals** and the **Lombs** about the consequences of current sunspot activity (Very Low) and the current weather, a High Pressure front stationary over Sydney leading to cold but fine weather.

I suspend judgement as to whether Camino's is 'good value' for night out at the Rocks. For example \$40 steaks were also on the menu, but the Rocks is after all



a Tourist zone eatery. A tolerable dining experience under the circumstances as a once a year outing, but I can eat out better elsewhere, we will have to see what we can manage for the Futurians dinner in November or so.

I Left the Restaurant a bit before 10 pm, just in time to catch a 423 that was waiting at the Circular Quay train / bus interchange. On the way to the bus stop I discovered the reason for the road closures, there was going to be some sort of 'Festival of Coffee' held their on the Sunday. After a five minute walk from the Clemton Park shops bus stop, I was home at just on 11 pm.

## *Green Pages – Political*

**Not entirely Political, Not Entirely Science Fictional (so Greenish Yellow pages?)**

### **The UTS Union Ltd. Clubs Conference on the evening of Wednesday August 10, 2005.**

For a first time this year the administrators of the UTS Cultural and sports clubs called a conference of club representatives, mostly to set out how the clubs can expect to exist in the post VSU legislation era. VSU stands for 'Voluntary Student Unionism'. Ostensibly the goal is 'free choice' but the effect of denying Student representative bodies the right to charge all enrolled students 'Union Fees' will be much the same as denying Municipal councils the right to levy rates – an end to community provided facilities other than on a 'user pays' basis. To state my biases, while I was at UTS and later at NSW, I used to look in askance at the proliferation of Student union funded 'Left' groups, but no Australian Democrat political, sport or movie clubs etc. These and the other Student interest club groups are only a fleabite of the welfare and facilities budget of UTS, a vertical university with practically no onsite sport facilities.

I attended this event with **John Fox** for the Sydney Futurians at UTS. The event gave me an opportunity to have a squiz at the level 6 facilities set up for use. We were in a dividable room set up with 168 seats and plenty of space up the front for panel tables.

I.e. this room on the Northern Side would more than do for the Freecon / Unicon, divided so that the back half was the second area and still have seating for up to 100(!) in the main room. Back walls for the displaying each of the Short Stories, space for the refreshments and freebies tables at the back.

### **Notes from the conference**

- Much said about the accounting complications of **GST and the ABN** (Australian Business Number) as it applies to club accounts. Much bother over nothing for most clubs, unless their turnover reaches \$100,000.

- **The Concourse and the Alumni Green** areas are available for booking. These are the most frequently passed by spaces by students and so are the prime location for stalls and membership promotions et al. Book-able at almost anytime through Owen or Monty, form is also on the UTS SA website.

- A deal has been done, so some **sporting facilities** at Sydney Boys High are available to UTS clubs for weekend use (at \$70 per hour?)

- The **publications section** has four artists employed, capable of producing Logos, Posters, Flyers and other stuff for clubs on request.

- The Students Association has available a **Clubs Emails** (UTS.Union.org.au) and **Generic domains**. A Gmail account for each club is on offer.

### **UTS Website and Marketing**

- There are examples available of UTS Union approved Logos, concern about getting UTS things clearly seen to be UTS things.

- There are 7 day and 28 day 'Blurt' publications that advertises on campus events.

- Implications, there are considerable advantages in getting Futurian and Freecon/Unicon stuff appropriately letter headed and website referenced etc.

### **Activities breakout**

#### **Owen Ferguson (Activities Boss)**

- Post Nelson and VSU the University clubs scene is not over. There is still some money (until 2006?) and plans have been made for all eventualities.

- He described the sorts of club funding and subsidies available, much on offer. First get a membership list together then get some Futurians T-shirts?

#### **Michael (Monty) Lamont (Non-Sporting Societies)**

- Asked the Students Union board for more, but not a bad list of stuff authorized and funded this year.

- When UTS clubs use UTS facilities one Security bloke will be provided free, a considerable cost to some functions.

- Club booze ups / Happy hours can be accommodated and booked at the UTS Unions several bars. An economical alternative for smaller clubs is to just book a booth at one of the weekly Happy hours.

- The Use of the UTS Great Hall for UTS Club functions is effectively 'not on', already booked for Academic and Commercial users.



- A UTS Clubs day on 18 August, a Free BBQ and feeding of stall holders! I asked about the provision of lights and backing stands for a more effective display.
- The 2006 Orientation day events will be down on level 3, in the Union Centre, over the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, 11am to 4 pm. Bookings are to be made by early September.
- Current priorities are to provide more Administrative support to clubs, i.e. Website functionality, club management of own internet display and accounting software and financial reporting.
- Reminder to all clubs present that re-affiliation, is an annual responsibility, required in March. Audit and re-affiliation packages are on the Students Association website.
- There will be a 'SmART' festival at the UTS on October 04 to 07 and the 'Infusions' Writers Festival.
- Was able to suggest the 'Responsible Adult' position for future club committees. I.e. a requirement that one or two of any year's incoming committee be a UTS staff member or student not likely to graduate at the end of the year, so as to be a 'holdover' club representative as the rest of the committee evaporates before the new committee is installed.
- Ended with repeated assurances that clubs will still be supported post VSU.

Even if the worst happens, the 'Full Nelson' or a milder 'Half Nelson' reduction of Student Union Funding, it looks as though Clubs like the Sydney Futurians at UTS are likely to be safe. Given our very slight draw on Students Association funds/services, we are more likely to be the last left than the first to be shown the door!

## Golden Pages – Science Fiction

The Golden pages this issue are not all they could be. A persistent cold for the best part of three weeks has put attendance at evening events (and travel after dark) off the agenda. In this time I had planned to attend Dr Who Tavern Meetings, Infinitas at Parramatta and a public meeting at the Sydney City Skywatchers. I hope the longer than usual July Futurians meeting notes are some compensation

Notes from the July 15, Sydney Futurians at UTS meeting,  
Topic: 'Problems with Galaxy Spanning Empires and Civilisations'

**Present were;** John August, David Bofinger, Garry Dalrymple, Peter Eisler, Diane and John Fox, Ross Mitchell, Elizabeth Pastor, Ann Rankins and Ian Woolf

### Contributions were received from

Amanda Atkinson, Peter Mcinnis, Merrill Pye and Ian Woolf (the last three being ABC Science Matters subscribers)

## Sydney Futurians at UTS procedural stuff

### Agenda:

- Selection of some New Topics for 2006 and after October meetings.
- Pre-Semester UTS publicity, Students Association printed flyer, Vertigo (thematic) UTS student newspaper (of a sort), Blurt! a weekly events at UTS (paper version) and the UTS Students Association website events listing
- Your thoughts on Non-UTS publicity?
- Annual Dinner in November, in time for a celebration of a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the second Australian SF convention?
- Ian Woolf is interested in identifying and encouraging the return of 'Old Futurians' to our meetings. The identification / location of 'all the Futurians that ever were' could contribute to the November dinner.
- I would like to hold a Freecon/Unicon at UTS during the October 28 to 30 Weekend, preferably a Friday night and a Saturday, but if SF&F groups at other Universities get involved we could add Sunday functions. More emphasis on 'Would be Writer' participation than 'Book SF&F' i.e. Book guests of Honour and flash fiction between panels rather than Morning and afternoon 'Writers Read' and a second room for book able 'open mike' bring and read your story for feedback and critique.

### Which resulted in:

Two suggested discussion topics for meetings after October 2005 are; '**Stories where the Main Character is seen as both Hero and Villain**' and '**Rome in SF**'

In previous years we worked through Stories set on the Planets of the Solar System, Mercury to Pluto, might we consider doing several historical Empires over several months worth of meetings?

JF – Says he has looked into it and we could use UTS Union catering at club rates for our November dinner

JF – raised the possibility of an (August?) Clubs week

JF - we have this room (1.510.C) booked through to November

GD and JF to subcommittee all UTS based publicity, Students Association printed flyer, mentions in campus circulating events listings and publications

**IW** – mentioned past successes of putting up meeting advice posters within the UTS campus.

**PE** – Noticing 'non-book' news items and responding to a proposal for a short story writing workshop meeting ahead of the Feb 2006 meeting, he asked what is the nature of the current meeting? are we still a 'Literary' meeting or non-Literary, **GD** explained Sydney Futurians @ UTS meetings as complimenting the UTS's other interest groups and societies.

**IW** – raised getting our meeting details listed in the back section of the Cosmos Science magazine

**EP** and **PE** for an out of UTS flyer sub-committee, targeted to reach second hand books and other fannish haunts, i.e. a Peep subcommittee

**EP** is to contact / liase with Sydney Uni's Sfnal groups

**GD** is to sub-committee an October Freecon/Unicon, if interested see him.

"If a Max Planck falls in the middle of a forest and there is nobody to hear it fall, then ..... ?"

## July 2005 NEWS ITEMS

**JA** – progress with the ASRI rocket project has reached the readying stages ahead of the launch of Ausroc 2.5. John will be giving a talk on Ritzian Relativity (a rival to Einstienian?) as part of a series of Philosophy Forum talks at the Gaelic club, first Wednesday in August (Aug 03, 2005 we think) – see websites etc for more details.

**DB** – Won a subscription to Cosmos for asking the best 'Frozen Head' question during the Cosmos sponsored Longevity talk. As Ian was on the panel, was this a Dorothy Dixter type set up?

**GD** – This morning's Sydney Morning Herald had a page two article with colour 'Artist's impression' (fatuous!) of a planet with a 'daily' triple Sunrise/Sunset. A Jovian mass planet has been detected, it orbits its primary star every 3.3 days. Further out in the system there are a pair stars orbiting each other every 156 days and jointly orbiting the primary every 25.7 years. This gave rise to comments about **Isaac Asimov's** 'Nightfall' but as the planet has a 3.3 day 'year' the glare from the primary star would allow very little of the Planet to ever experience much 'night'. A more appropriate SF nal reference might be to **Brian Aldiss'** Heleconia series, long warm seasons with multiple stars, long cold ones with only faint ones (provided you look past the 3.3 day year!) For more details contact **Dr. Konacki** California Institute of Technology.

- **SF TV of late:** Dr. Who (weekdays) and Dr. Who (Saturday Night), Atlantis is back, Twilight Zone (Mondays at 1 am ish) and Taken the Mini series? – Is Silver Sun still running?

- **SF ish movies of late:** War of the Worlds – Sin City and Fantastic Four, the last two Comic books to movie adaptations, the other is a Tom Cruise Movie, Nuf said?

- The failure of the recent Starwarz movie to exceed expectations written up as diminishing interest in 'Science Fiction movies' – Snort! – When was the last good SF Movie, 2001?

- The **Rob Hood** edited 'Daijaku' Anthology was reviewed by **Van Ikin** in the Spectrum section of the July 9/10 Sydney Morning Herald.

- There is some sort of a 'writing for children, juveniles/YA' weekend at the YWCA on July 22 and 23. A **Selwa Anthony** organised event, several writers known to fandom will be taking part – I think.

- Details of the Melbourne 2007 Natcon is up on the usual fannish lists, still nothing visible about 'Con Syder' in October 2006!

- Much is being made of some book about a 'Half Blood Prince' being released this Saturday, **JK Rowling**.

- The (originally for May) flight of the Space Shuttle is again delayed.

- News of Sydney fan (and ANZAPA Member) **Womble's** ill health / relapse were conveyed to the meeting and all joined in wishing her a speedy recovery and return to good health (**Karen Warnock**).

**PE** – Announced several book sales, including the closing down sale for the Gertrude and Alice bookshop. Lengthy comments on the behind the counter view of the contractual secrecy associated with this weekend's new Harry Potter release. 14 or so copies beat the embargo, escaping into the wild via a shipment to a Canadian Grocery store. Higher court Judges made an unenforceable ruling that these books could not be opened / read ahead of the embargo date.

**DF** – Announced the discovery of a rare and endangered primitive fern found growing near the Opera House / Tarpeian steps. A 'Skeleton Fork' fern, it features hardly any leaf and yellow berry like spore pods. During the meeting Diane was observed to be doing her mailing comments for ANZAPA #226. Diane also raised the 'Tasmanian question' in respect to The War of the Worlds, something that was much on **HG Wells'** mind as a cautionary tale for Imperialists.

**JF** – John mentioned that we now have a Futurians @ UTS Bulletin board for talking about SF nal stuff.

- A computer software company is making a 'buy the software- fly into space' special offer, probably in 'SpaceShipOne' or a similar up and down thing rather than an orbital trip. This lead to hopes that the winning geek is **real fat**, two or three hundred kilos minimum!

**RM** – brought news of the Solar Sailor space probe launched for the Planetary Society – presumed never to have made it to orbit. Launched by an ex-Soviet

missile from an ex-Soviet submarine (was it a Nuklear Wessel Keptin?) at a cost of \$6 million it was cheap! Launched from the Barents Sea near Nuke Sub base coz ex-Soviet missiles are cheap but ex-Soviet submarines are expensive to put to sea!

- Space Shuttle flight delayed again.

**EP** – The three Disc edition of **David Lynch's** super dooper special DVD in a tin 'Dune' is now out. \$5 more for the tin and it is not even 'sand worm' proof!

– Much annoyed by the treatment of **Dakota Fanning** in 'War of the Worlds', theory on the progress of hysteria in Hollywood movies – First Non Whites then Women, now children. This statement was contested by others.

**AR** – has been reading 'The battle of Corrin', the 'for now' conclusion to the 'Butlerian Jihad' cycle of the Dune books. Harkonnen and Atreides houses reconciled, ancient differences explained? Well for now!

**IW** – Video footage has been produced, of images of the outside world as seen by a cat, from inside a cat's head (jumper leads on the cat's optic nerve?). This is the start of the technology needed for 'Strange Days' and inevitably lead to off coloured discussion of internet sites featuring 'pussy-cam', turning cats into mobile phones and asking if the above qualified as P.E.T. scanning devices.

– attended the recording of **Ian Triffit's** SF radio play at the opera house with **David Bofinger** and **Peter Eisler**?

- In addition to the above, Ian gave a fairly detailed report on his experiences at the 'Science on Tap', 'Longevity for beginners' event (organized by **Wilson da Silva's** Cosmos magazine) that he had taken part in on Thursday July 07. This longevity' event was well attended by Past-urians, Futurians and 'Sydney in 91' people. Ian will be reporting on this as part of the 2SERFM Science Discovery program (see the website) and my notes on his report to the Futurian meeting are to be found in the Blue Pages section.

There were intermittent eruptions of Dot Com digressions and deep computer Tech Talk during the above. There were also frequent spontaneous comments on 'War of the Worlds' – **Tom Cruise's** acting was generously described as being 'inert'!

### A review of the meeting

This meeting report will probably be the largest that I will file for a long time. The July meeting attracted ten people, which is the largest turnout in some time. The meeting ran from 6.50 pm to past 9.30 pm. Partly this was because I tried to have an Agenda of procedural 'club business' items discussed before the discussion of news. Partly it was because several previous Futurians made a special effort to attend this meeting. The

numbers definitely affected the meeting dynamic in such a way as to suggest to me that there is a numerical upper limit to the number of people that can take part in a meeting of the current informal format.

### A Mission Statement?

This concerns me greatly, as I believe that for Sydney Futurians @ UTS meetings, 'more is better'. An aim of the work that John Fox and I have put into becoming 'Sydney Futurians @ UTS' has been to be able to reach more people than previously; and to be able to give more UTS students / staff some taste of the broader 'Science Fiction and Fantasy' than that which is currently on offer from the other 'SF-nal' clubs at the UTS who offer activities in Anime, Manga, Gaming, Words (writers) etc. I would like to see several UTS students attending our meetings each year and finding in our meetings an introduction to the broader world of 'SF&F Fandom' a stepping stone to APAs, Conventions and all the rest of the community that we know of as 'Fandom'. I.e. we need to keep holding meetings that can comfortably accommodate a few more 'walk in' participants and not seem to a newcomer to be an unmediated argument that excludes contribution from the less confident attendees. If we are to have future meetings of ten or more people it might be necessary to impose more formal regulation on the meeting, i.e. defining the order of whom speaks when and for how long. Possibly we could modify the form of the discussion by arranging in advance to allow for two or more views of the next month's topic and then to allow evidence to be presented with less time spent arguing what sorts of books/stories are valid/invalid for the discussion topic.

### I dismiss your view of reality and substitute a reality of my own choosing! (per Mythbusters)

For this meeting report on the July meeting you will get both a version of meeting notes and a version of my pre-meeting notes as the take that I took on the topic was rejected by the meeting. My take on the topic was that we were to discuss those books/stories where the problems of up and running GSC&Es were disclosed. The mood of the meeting however was that we were here to discuss the problems of how a GSC&E could be set up in a validly Science Fictional manner. I.e. the types of innovation necessary in a Book/story to set up a GSC&E that was plausible and self consistent rather than 'it just is' or 'because I say so' as in a Fantasy Book/story. So enjoy these two different takes on the topic.

**What is it we are here to talk about?**

Fantasy based GSC&Es or Science Fiction based ones. The presumption of 'unreal' FTL physics assumed to indicate Fantasy? To allow for a non-FTL GSC&E **Hibernation** is used in books by **FM Busby** and 'Between the strokes of Night' by **Charles Sheffield**.

In Dune where there are FTL space ships, the guild of navigators employs 'Seers' who can see the future coz to navigate the ships they need to see ahead into time to see where their ships will be i.e. FTL flight but not FTL Data transmission!

From Babylon 5 was offered an insight that, the Universe originally appeared to be Aristotelian but was actually Copernican, but was actually Newtonian, but was actually Einsteinian, but was actually FTL, but was actually Time travel enabling, a daisy chain of revelations about the universe revealed by successive developments in human understandings of physics.

The question of **communication** in a GSE&E in a **speed of transmission limited Universe** is sometimes solved by sending **packet ships** through portals or 'Warp' speed carrying data, sidestepping FTL transmission prohibition.

**Body swapping** – in **Piers Anthony's** 'Perlain Quest' (something to do with a development of ideas about Kirilian energy, which shortly after were found to be photographic effect entirely due to moisture) it is possible to transfer personalities onto bodies and so beat the costs of physical FTL travel.

Several stories/books were discussed where the Universe operates under **prohibitions and speed limits for matter or data transmission**. In some **U.K. Le Guin** stories an 'Ansible' (an anagram of 'lesbian?') allowed for instantaneous communication but not travel, i.e. fly off on a hundred year long relativistic flight to the next star (12 years subjective) and talk to your kids as they grew up and died. In a **Timothy Zahn** book, 'Deadman Switch' human life can't travel at FTL, so pilots have to be found to guide ships while they are temporarily dead. A GSE&E run by **Telepaths** able to communicate between past and future was posited as a cheaper and more convenient way of ruling than FTL ships.

**Rimworlds and Frontier 'Badlands'** any GSE&E must have edges where the Empire or Civilization's rules no longer apply, civil or in some cases even reality or the laws of physics aren't the same as 'back home'. Bert A Chandler's (Australian Writer) Rim Worlds and Poul Anderson's 'Flandry' books explore such worlds. Vernor Vinge's 'The Zones', 'A fire upon the deep' explore a galaxy with prohibition zones, at the centre; No

life, further out; intelligent life possible, further out; machine intelligence possible, further out; ghod-like enlightened beings possible etc. I.e. Evolutionary 'Slow Lanes' closer to the galactic hub!

In **Fred Pohl** and **CM Kornbluth's** 'Search the Sky', a FTL ship is found and a group go exploring, they find devastated world after world, as each has by it's own hand died, i.e. it may be possible to trade goods FTL but planet saving cultural exchange seems harder to achieve.

**Non-FTL commerce?** (Book title and Author not recorded) Families of Galactic traders roam the universe and preach against innovation! Coz every time they see Planetary cultures 'optimising' and getting too modern they observe a narrowing of cultural options which leads to cultural and economic inflexibility and inevitably ends with complete collapse!

Discussion at this point bogged down on exactly what goods could be traded across the Galaxy, with FTL or without, possibly 'Intellectual Property' but if so, only once?

In Star Rigger by **John De Chancy** 'Portals' and 'Red Limit Highway' a planet linking 'free trade' roadway set up by the ancients is still functioning with over whelming force applied to those who attempt to infringe the freedom of the road. Travelers are also immune from any attack while in transit!

Problem with what makes up a GSE&C? In **Ian M. Banks** 'The Culture' series the central internal problem of The Culture is about not being seen to be an 'Evangelizing homogenizing Horde' as if they are, their civilization will be 'whacked' by other more 'Libertarian' cultures. Hence they have to put up with a problem of conflict between two cultures. The Evangelizing homogenizing Horde (those who wish to offer you the better things in life) and 'The Afront', a group who want to conquer and impose their lifestyle on others (at the point of a Raygun etc.) Effectively the Universe wants to remain 'Multicultural'.

In (the late) **Jack L Chalker's** 'The Well of Worlds', a group of beings set up several universes with a reset button and a resident concierge, so I guess they have earned the right to set up GSC&Es whichever way they want!

**Falun Gong Digression**, China under the CPP seen as an analogue for a GSC&E in crisis, due to it's inability to live with more than five 'Official Religions'?

Isaac Asimov's Foundation Trilogy was mentioned within a digression. In addition to the claim of the **Al Qaeda** 'The Foundation' inspiration (credibility?) the Japanese Nerve gassing **Aum sect** are supposed to have been inspired by the idea of cycles of civilization. They saw their cult as the kernel of a future rise of civilization so were they thought they would hasten the process by helping to push this current civilization off the edge and into a new dark age ahead of schedule. –

Thanks for the thought guys! What exactly was that explosion at a sheep station?

### Alienness

In **Fred Pohl's** several Hee Chee Saga books, the Hee Chee are hiding out in a black hole waiting until an unknown threat has passed their part of the Galaxy, or until someone else sorts out the problem. In the meantime Humans are able to borrow and use their second hand technology, without any understanding of how it works. I.e. think of an abandoned set of shopping malls and car parks where the keys are left in cars and the air conditioning, radio/CD player and gear settings are inexplicable.

In **David Webber's** Honor Harrington Universe, a space based analogue of the Horatio Hornblower stories and the wars between revolutionary France and Great Britain. Aliens we can comprehend are in a conflict that we can comprehend. In 'some book' by C. H. Cherryh several different alien species are able to cooperate or conflict in some things, but fail to connect in others.

### Parallel world GSC&Es

Isaac Asimov's 'The End of Eternity',  
Robert Heinlien's 'Number of the Beast',  
Keith Laumer's 'Worlds of the Imperium',  
Larry Niven's 'All the myriad Ways'  
H Beam Piper's 'Paratime' stories, and  
Harry Turtledove's 'Crosstime Traffic'. All deal with stories where people and goods can be moved up and down time or across to 'other' Earths and Universes, allowing for many very different GSC&Es to be created and Sfnal issues and paradoxes to be explored.

**Clever Kiap Stories** – in large GSC&E where the metropolitan rulers are remote and their directives essentially meaningless to the on the ground situation at the periphery of the GSC&E, wise and resourceful district officers are needed to creatively re-interpret or ignore 'Head Office's' orders for the good of the Empire and its remotest citizens.

The Retief series by **Keith Laumer** is one example of these stories, presumably based on the memoirs of colonial field officers with African, Indian or South American experience, wonder if there are SF stories out there based on (in Dutch) Indonesian or PNG experiences?

## Garry's notes ahead of the July 15, 2005, Sydney Futurians meeting.

Topic: Problems with Galaxy Spanning Empires & Civilisations

Contributions received from:

**Ray Stephens, Peter Macinnis and Merrill Pye (ABC Science Matters subscribers) and Amanda Atkinson**

### Three side notes that were raised

#### Peter Mcinness pointed out

Gary, just a note in passing -- look for some fairly neat linguistic plays in 'Dune', using Arabic roots. Many of the terms appear to be Arabic looking, but most people miss the most obvious one. My knowledge of Arabic is largely second-hand through loans into Indonesian, but the Arabic word for 'world' appears in BOTH Indonesian and Swahili as 'dunia'. I happened to see a similar word used for 'world' in Turkey (I think it was 'duniya', but don't hold me to that), three years back, so the term has spread remarkably widely. Then again, see <http://www.chotisiduniya.com/> or <http://mail.sarai.net/pipermail/reader-list/2003-June/002850.html> -- turns out is WAS 'duniya'. This was about the time **Anthony Burgess** published 'A Clockwork Orange', which fascinated readers with some oddball steals, mainly from Russian, and I have often wondered if **Frank Herbert** was playing a similar game.

#### Amanda Atkinson's comment was:

Atlantis' human farming, 'Lifeforce' Sucking Wraiths, are an unlikely cause for a GSE&C. Living under a rock for 25 years between



feeds is a much less credible 'civilization' or way of life compared to Stargate's Go'ulds and their symbiotic / parasitic relationship with humans and their past practice of establishing human cultures across the Galaxy.

### **Merrill Pye had this to say:**

Hugo and Nebula Award winning author **Geoffrey Landis**, recently appointed as the Ronald E. McNair-NASA Visiting Professor of Astronautics at M.I.T., published a non-fiction paper applying the Mathematics of Percolation Theory to the spread of galactic civilizations, and estimated the fractal distribution in space of civilized solar systems, based on assumptions of travel time, distances between stars, and so forth. You might be able to contact him through his home page: [www.sff.net/people/Geoffrey.Landis/](http://www.sff.net/people/Geoffrey.Landis/)

**Professor Christine M. Carmichael**, whose Ph.D. in Physics and postdoc were at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, points out that Analog had an article on problems with the economics of galaxy-spanning civilizations, and that "Starmaker" by **Olaf Stapledon** discussed the issue. See the chronology of Stapledon's novel, intermeshed with actual astronomical predictions, at: **TIMELINE COSMIC FUTURE** - [www.magicdragon.com/UltimateSF/timelineCF.html](http://www.magicdragon.com/UltimateSF/timelineCF.html)

## **Problems with Galaxy Spanning Empires and Civilisations**

Found this hard to think of material for. There are lots of Problems with the idea of Galaxy Spanning Empires and Civilisations (GSE&Cs) in Science Fiction Stories but few of the books/ movies/ TV episodes go into much detail explaining why.

Thanks to a few suggestions from the ABC Science Matters subscribers I was able to look at the question again but from a different angle, what makes Empires and world wide Cultures Happen?

After all, all GSE&Cs worth writing about are problematic by their nature, Earth Empires and Civilisations are not planned or logical, they proceed in steps but there is rarely a generational plan, i.e. from British queens Elizabeth 1 to Victoria things just happened and English ended up as the world language by accident rather than by any single logical multigenerational plan.

The subgenre of 'Space Opera' is almost exclusively about GSE&Cs in conflict coz describing conflict is the nature of storytelling.

An entirely stable, prosperous and peaceful GSE&Cs doesn't sell computer games. That said, (I have been told) that there are Computer games of the sort where you build your forces within a GSE&Cs prior to engaging in conquest or conflict. I presume that the writers of these have con into the problems that beset GSE&Cs.

## **Books that seem to fit the topic**

In Frank Herbert's Dune series a GSE&Cs is in existence mostly due to the existence and powers of the Spice.

In 'The Butlerian Jihad', Frank Herbert's son continues the story but pays more attention to how the distance between inhabited worlds leads to problems, War, strategies and Information transfer technologies.

Some GSE&C problems referred to in Peter F Hamilton's 'Night's Dawn' Trilogy

In Jerry Pournelle's 'The Janissaries' a planet is populated by humans (and Centaurs) abducted from earth at 800 year intervals. The Nasty Aliens have set them to work cultivating very slow growing drug, comply or get nuked!

In Cordwainer Smith's 'Norstrillia' the longevity drug 'Stroon' funds a GSE&C and makes possible several decade long trips to and about the star spanning civilisation, what's a few decades for a trip to 'old Earth' if you expect to live a couple of hundred years? Clearly, a really good, in demand Drug does have potential for the inadvertent setting up of a GSE&C, at least in Science Fictional Universes.

It surprises me now that the basis of the British empire, it grew as a result of non-government initiatives motivated by the Tea, Opium and other commodity traders, is not more frequently remarked an by other than the lunar right ( i.e. **Lyndon Larouche's** claim that 'The Queen is the world's biggest drug dealer').

**Larry Niven's** Ring World books do cover some of the problems that beset GSE&Cs, in that the enormous inhabitable space of the Ring World is able to absorb waves of arrivals and defeat attempts to build a single GSE&C over only Solar system type distances.



Joe Haldeman's The Forever War is a rare example of the problems that arise in a limited GSE&Cs, the conflict between Men and an Alien species.

Robert Asperin's The Bug Wars covers some of the same ground in a species in conflict story.

## Problems without examples, all deal with the interplay of Technological limits, Human motivation and Distances

### The Economic imperative?

What financial inducement is there for populations on separate planets to desire to trade across great distance and so form a single economic entity, rather than be purely planet-centric.

### Transport?

How can people move between planets to be a single Population. This also has Military and trade considerations.

### Communication?

Instantaneous communication or limited to light speed communication, how to keep ideas in common

### Rulership and Politics?

Who is King/Queen across the star lanes and how does he/she remain in power against all off planet contenders?

How do you run a multi-planet democracy or do you settle for a theocracy, direct line to Ghod rather than slower representative government / consultative processes?

### The Aliens and Alien-ness?

How would real Aliens fit into a human dominated GSE&Cs (or vice a Versa) i.e. look at **HG Wells'** 'The War of the Worlds' aliens do not even find sufficient culture in common with humans to demand Earth's capitulation! (or to practise simple airlock hygiene!).

### Radiating Cultural Fission

If there is a way of traversing the Galaxy to set up a GSE&Cs then groups setting off at different times from a 'home' planet will take with them and tend to distil distinctive aspects of a previous universal culture, or would be dissident subgroups actively fleeing the common culture.

i.e. in the **David Webber's** Honor Harrington universe the cultures of Grayson and Masada fission into violently opposed cultures because of minor doctrinal differences.

### The presumption of a fixed culture

To have a GSE&C at all, there is un-stated presumption that all Social and Technological progress happens at all places within the GSE&C at the same rate, otherwise Planets and distant settlements would just fall off the map.

See **Damien Broderick's** 'The Spike' to see why this would seem to be impossible.

**David Brin's** 'Uplift' series goes some way to providing an alternative to 'The Spike', with a technologically static GSE&C drawing it's science and technology from a library of ancients knowledge, a resource that all (except humans) are content to draw on instead of continuing to try to innovate.

## Notes from my visit to the 'Phoenix Rising' event on Sunday August 07, A Sydney Dr. Who club event at the Drummoyne RSL Club

A feature of my 'pre-fannish' life was a fairly regular attendance at what used to be almost monthly 'Dr Who Parties' at a large lecture hall at Sydney University courtesy of the Sydney Uni Dr. Who club, as the initial generation of Dr Who fans were at that time passing through University. Dr. Who events were the first occasions that I tried anything like market stall selling, so I attended this one with an eye open to the possibilities of selling stuff at some time. This time the merchandise on sale was only the club's merchandise, discount Dr Who interest stuff and the inevitable Mike McGann. To get to this event I left home well before 11 am and arrived at the Drummoyne RSL club at 12.30, late, missing the first program items and just in time for the lunch break. I had had to catch two busses to get there and with each there was a half hour wait for the next service, i.e. I spent more time spent waiting for a bus than travelling on a bus, such is life without a car in Sydney.

I had brought along a heap of Dr. Who Target books and I gave one to most of the people present (about half left over for the **Whovention** in October) and I handed out a green flyer, my attempt at recruiting a 'Who is Dr Who Now?' panel for the October Freecon. I rejoined the Sydney Dr Who club and went downstairs to have lunch with **Charmaine Spears** (from Infinitas bookshop meetings) and her brother. I chose to sit with

Charmaine rather than the other Who fans coz she also had been carrying the flu for a couple of weeks.

The program items that I saw were mostly the incidental TV coverage of the show and the **Christopher Ecclestone**, taped by friends in the UK or possibly pirated from local cable TV, there were interviews with the new Doctor, the new story editor and even **Christopher Ecclestone** attempting to drive a new car in some sort of celebrity driver, driver skill competition. They also showed a 2003 BBC 'Forty years of Dr. Who' special and the final episode of the current series, which features the regeneration scene that introduces the next Dr. Who character (the new generation **Peter Davidson?**). An attempt to play an episode of Quatermass was plagued by technical difficulties. It featured the new Doctor in a supporting role, as A Doctor!

There would have been about thirty or forty people present during the day, I was surprised by the fairly even mix of men and women in the audience. The club merchandise is now almost exclusively DVDs and Audio CDs (the 'radio' Dr Who episodes) where as the last time I paid much attention it was mostly newsletters T Shirts and the occasional Videotape – and so it goes.

**The inevitable Mike McGann** (and partner of more than ten years?) was attending, selling his T shirts, belt buckles and other fannish curios. Mike is still the 'angry young man of fandom' with a well thumbed address book of self identified enemies in Sydney SF fandom, long after most of the people who were a part of that era of Sydney SF fandom have largely moved on. He spoke of his distaste for the people running FSF ('No Friends of Science Fiction') and for our beloved Jack Herman. He lives in some sense comforted by a sense of self exile from SF fandom. Self exile because I believe he has been told that if he just turns up and shuts up, he can come back to SF&F fandom pretty much whenever he wants, but for him his views are 'a matter of principle' while to objective observers they are just an unnecessary barrier to him selling more of his T shirt designs. Mike these days speaks highly of people who put up stickers about Lebanese rape gangs and other 'patriot' issues.

I used to be a lot more concerned about Mike and his views until I realized that some part of his 'zeal' for unpopular or egregious causes was probably a consequence of the effects of his diabetes, which he has tried to control with minimal medication. My cousin John has at times exhibited much the same degree of zeal, and a subsequent disappointment at the workings

of the world, but, admittedly for a very different set of causes.

Even with the encounter with mike, it was an enjoyable enough day to encourage repeat attendance. For \$8 a head (or \$6 a head now that I am a Sydney Dr Who member), it is a slightly more welcoming a prospect than paying to go to a \$12-\$15 for a Friends of Science Fiction meeting at Lidcombe. I can see myself attending more of these events in the future, now that I have the Saturday market stall out of the way, I could even take my niece? One disappointment was to learn from Dallas Jones that currently no Junior memberships have been sold for the October Whovention. I had rounded up an donated a drawer full of Dr Who Target books to the Sydney Dr Who group in the hope that they would be going to encourage children's interest in Dr. Who.

## Books Read, July & August, 2005

Started 23 June, Mind Players By Pat Cadigan, 276 pages © 2005 (Australian) Not finished in June.  
 30 June to 04 July, The Atrocity Shop, by Kurt Von Trojan, 172 Pages © 1998 but written in 1970s? (Australian)  
 4 and 5 July, The Deadly Crystals, by Felix Jenkins, 37 Pages (11,843 words) © 2005, (Australian)  
 7 to 10 July, September Fortean Times, Fortean Britain Edn., by Various writers, 80 pages, © 2005  
 12 to 99 July, Rule Golden/Double Meaning, by Damon Knight, 188 pages, © 1953 & 1954  
 18 and 19 July, Private Eye Magazine – UK Election Edn., by various Writers, 80 pages, © 2005  
 24 to 31 July, Asimov's SF Magazine Special Double Issue April/May 2005, Edited by Sheila Williams, written by various writers, 240 pages, © 2005  
 Various times in July and August, Symes Hole, by Ian Wedde, 324 pages, © 1986 – I finally gave up at p. 48!  
 2 to 6 August, Analog SF Magazine June 1986, Edited by Stanley Schmidt, 192 pages, © 1986  
 07 to 12 August, My Silent War, by Kim Philby, 189 pages, © 1968  
 12 and 13 August, Changi – The Funny Side, by Slim Degrey, 208 pages, © 1991  
 14 to 25 August, Catface, by Clifford D. Simak, 251 pages, © 1978  
 from 25 August, Colonization 3 - Aftershocks, by Harry Turtledove, 661 pages, © 2001

## Short Book Reviews

My July and August reading had a number of disappointments. I was really looking forward to

'Symes Hole' (which according to a theory popular in the 19th Century was the Southern outlet for a hollow Earth). I suppose I should have been warned off by the cover blurb 'A minor Blockbuster' – Daily Post'. It was from and of New Zealand. It dealt with the unconventional history of the people of all races that were already living there as the 'history makers' arrived to create British New Zealand and there was the possibility of learning about an obscure bit of 19th Century Science. I was expecting an enjoyable romp through history, to meet persons and events written out of the polite history etc. Instead I hit another 'Hand Maiden' style exercise of story telling, the smell of rum and tar on the Sydney docks as some sort of elaborate set up to pre-explain why the MC could end up quite happily living with the Maori 'Savages' and some sort of drunken party within New Zealand's (Bee Hive) Parliament house. After the Chunder and talking statue scene, I thought this was fair fannish literary comment and a good time to chuck it aside and start on something else. Readers Digest holds the niche for 'Condensed Books', perhaps there is a niche for 'de-Artsed' books. I.e. to re-tell the story without the overly laboured character building digressions and reader whiplash and seasick inducing flashbacks. That is, to tell the story that begs to be told rather than telling a story about the story so as to show off the writers talent for matching the current pretensions to 'Modern Literary Style'.

The most recent SF&F Magazine that I have read this year was also a disappointment compared to a 1986 SF magazine that I read shortly after. Without exception, the stories in, Asimov's SF Magazine April / May 2005, seemed flat and devoid of anything new to say.

I started reading The Atrocity Shop, by Kurt Von Trojan at much the same time that I started to get into the New Dr Who. This book was one of the few books that I buy each year while attending SF&F events. I was able to pick up another Kurt Von Trojan book from the local Bankstown Salvation Army shop. I was very much aware of the same undercurrent in the New Who when I was reading this, - 'he's back, but he's on his own this time'. It takes a very long time for it to dawn on you that the main character is a latter day Jesus Christ, or possibly it could be just Jerry Cornelius, out of his time and out of his head, delusional that he is the modern Christ. The book leaves you to draw your own conclusions, this could be Christ suffering in Hell, the modern world, one last chance for human redemption, or that Religion has got it wrong, Christ on an eternal treadmill is the way of the world. I think you could call this story a classic, in spite of it not being the sort of

story that will appeal to many in each generation, it could have been written about the 1960s/70s, the Thatcherite / Reaganite years, or the current Bush / Howard period.

Rule Golden / Double Meaning, by Damon Knight, turned out to be two stories to make up a fairly thin paperback. In Rule Golden a tripod alien turns up, is held by the 'Authorities' and a newspaperman discovers the truth. He gets confined by the military, meets the alien who has curious powers, and together they escape to roam the world. The Alien is on a mission from the Galactic parliament or whatever, they are concerned that Humans have Nukes, the potential for Space Flight and nasty attitudes. The alien's message is reform or else. The Alien's weapon is a 'do unto others' contagion (an early SF reference to Nanites or virus?) which make conscious cruelty no-longer possible, and carnivore species like Lions and Tigers are just going to have to go vegan or go extinct!

In Double Meaning the empire of human worlds is supreme and supremely 'anal' in that to control planets and a rigidified society, to have effective rule from the centre, ambiguity is the enemy and there can be only one meaning for all words etc. They have taken planning to absurd extremes, i.e. anti-alien detectors have been warehoused for hundreds of years to counter all for see able contingencies. The Alien's arrive, the system has to rely on a laidback Colonial whose ambiguity and superiority in anticipating the Alien implies that 'The System' no longer is infallible.

I found Asimov's SF Magazine April / May 2005, which I bought in Canberra while waiting for Conflux to start, a very disappointing read. The main story being an unmemorable story about an agent of a displaced government organizing a resistance by manipulating the criminal underworld of an occupied planet into turning against the brutal occupiers – well Duh! How else is it done?

My Silent War, by Kim Philby was interesting to read, Forty years after it's key event and decades after the 'Fall' of the Soviet Union. A two-word review for the book is 'Self Serving', all staff of Intelligence services encountered but for the 'professionals' of the KGB were venal fools, or incompetents. Philby was first and always an agent for the Comintern, never a turncoat and so on. Logical avenues for understanding of his trajectory to treason are belittled, such as the fact that his father studied then converted to Islam, with this in mind what is so surprising about a Public School boy at Oxford studying Economics deciding that Socialism is the Go. Nothing in the book dissuades me from the

view that Burgess, Philby and Maclean were of a generation and a indulged social class that was brought up to rule 'The Greatest Empire on which Sun Never Sets', which on observing the social chaos of the 1930s from the comfort of Cambridge/Oxford decided to jump ship and serve as functionaries of the 'Next Great Empire', Stalin's Soviet Union. Diagnosing the self evident ills of the British Empire and Capitalism of the 1930s, instead of seeking to serve their fellow man or their country, they instead sought out an advanced booking for a comfortable stop serving the new order that they thought was sure to come.

**Changi – The Funny Side**, by Slim Degrey. I read this book with thoughts of my father always in mind. We are currently celebrating the 60th. Anniversary of VP day and I just wish my father had lasted a year or two longer to see it, for more of his generation to have been able to take a final 'lap of honour' for having come through those times. Slim Degrey was a prisoner of the Japanese in Singapore, (for American readers read prisoner on Bataan). He was fortunate not to be sent out as slave labourers for the Burma Railway, as so many were. He spent most of his captivity as an active member of the AIF concert party, which did so much to raise morale. Much happened during those four years, but of this, Slim was able to record in this slender and illustrated book the rare moments of humour amid the four years of captivity. It is well worth reading, as it records a victory of sorts above and beyond the victory of arms we celebrate (in Australia) as VP day, the victory of the human spirit of my father's generation over adversity.

Had my father been a year or two older he could have been in the AIF in time to end up a prisoner of the Japanese. At this time of year it is often on my mind that given my father's physical condition and suffering as he neared death, he must have felt very much like the victims of the Japanese, Prisoners of War and Asian Civilians alike.

There is an additional note of implied tragedy comes with this book. I bought it on August 12, 2005, as one of eight books for four Dollars at the Bankstown St. Vincents opportunity shop. It is a signed copy, dedicated to 'illegible and Joy', possibly the hurriedly written down nickname of a POW's and his wife at the end of an RSL club appearance? I fear that this book is one of 'Grandma's things', that were sent off to the opshop as the family house went onto the Sydney Real Estate market as a deceased estate. Lest we forget.

In **Catface**, by Clifford D. Simak – Midlife academic takes sabbatical near his childhood home, discovers a 'rift in time' and a cat like alien sole survivor of an ancient space ship crash in his own back yard! (As you do!).

I have always found Simak's stories to be a dependable SF read, and I have several anthologies of his work about the place. I was uncertain if I had read this story before, but I soon noticed some characteristic story furniture, the themes of the boyhood country shack and the Time Travel / Time Displacement. In this story, 'Time Roads' can be created at whim by 'Catface' the seemingly eternal alien survivor, a power that eventually passes to the Main Character just in the nick of time to prevent the story 'failing'. I expected this to be a hard SF story of a time rift/portal and an exploration of a stranded alien's psychology etc. I was not disappointed. The book explored some of the practicalities of announcing that you have a working time machine / portal and the consequences of trying to make a living from it.

My current reading is **Colonization 3 - Aftershocks**, by Harry Turtledove. The usual set up, a SF nal Soap Opera of a 1970s Earth overrun by Lizards from space. In the previous book Nazi Germany tried to nuke the Lizard fleet in orbit, the Americans are building Space Colonies out near Jupiter and not much is heard of Australia or New Zealand. The World is America, Canada, The Japanese Empire, The Chinese Communists, the now radioactive ruins of the German Reich, Israel, Poland and newly freed France. The rest doesn't seem to matter, World war games played on a card table? By no means brilliant stuff, but it does suck you in.

### **Received, but not yet read or reviewed**

**Exit Saurus Sapiens** by Felix Jenkins / Rex Stirwell, 38 pages long (about 15,000 words?) © 2005.

I will probably be able to read and review this for an October or November ANZAPA issue, work towards the October 28 to 30 Sydney Freecon / Unicon is rather on my mind at present. - GPD

In **The Deadly Chrysalis** The second longer of Felix's stories as with **The Butterfly Kid** it has butterflies present in the story line (some theme developing here!).

It was a much better story than 'The Butterfly Kid', much closer to a novel than the effectively single scene short story of 'The Butterfly Kid', in that a World threat was diagnosed, detected, neutralized and the aftermath described, all in about only 2,000 words more than in 'The Butterfly kid' story.

It has been useful to me to have read both stories and to combine these with memories of the pre-Magic Casements Flash Fiction read & crit session at the February Sydney Futurians meeting. I have made considerable efforts up until now to avoid the Writers group lifestyle out of a strong sense of distaste for the emotional intensity over essentially trivial matters of style and mode of expression. That said, from the confrontation with someone else's writing style, I note the following; in writing well there are at least three things to keep in mind and to a degree battle against.

They are:

1. **What are the ESSENTIALS** of the story, the bare facts that make this adventure / encounter different from other stories
2. **What are the FACTS**, scenery and circumstances that THE READER will want know as a result of 1.
3. **What does the WRITER'S WISH** (consciously or unconsciously) **to tell the reader**, description in detail of places, events or practices that are dear to the WRITER but probably only incidental colouring not essential to 1. or 2. To do writing well I have come to appreciate that you have to have a story to tell, the skill to write it and then the sense to be able to back off a bit, see what a Reader might want read about the story and then to comply in the re-write the reader's desires. How's that for a philosophy of SF&F writing?

The Deadly Chrysalis is not that bad a story, the story line engaged me and I was curious as to how it would end, but in characterizations and background scenery, I feel it could be made better or more 'saleable' by more attention to 2. and 3. On the down side, it was riddled with typos. On most pages, it seemed, I had to stop reading to try to guess what the intended word was, given that some words had missing or superfluous letters.

## **Non-Award Winning Original Fiction**

### **'Rhiannon Lemony Persnickety'**

Started February 11, 2005, now 500 words 17 July 2005

Rhiannon was sitting by the fire trying to study her law journal, but she couldn't concentrate.

Her brother Lyle had just gone visiting the new neighbours, the Spiders Shelob and Kirby, and been eaten by them.

How best to use his now free room?

By the fire's flickering light the journal seemed to be printed in Orc-ish, so it was a welcomed distraction when she heard the gravel on gravel crunch of the approach of Roland Magdason, a local Blue Mountains Sandstone Rock Troll, currently between IT jobs and working as a Shire postman.

Roland's footsteps grew louder as he approached the Hobbit residences of Flores Row. His stopped briefly outside the Persnickety family burrow's round green door. He blew his whistle once and then stomped off, the noise of his footsteps softening as they receded.

Hearing the whistle, the ancient Persnickety family messenger Galah, Boomer, flew from its perch to the door, but returned letter-less. Mildly surprised, Rhiannon put aside her law journal and walked to the burrow's front door.

Approaching the door she saw that Roland had left an oddly shaped, parcel, it was in her publisher's wrapping paper, very small checks. It felt when she picked it up, explaining why Boomer had failed to bring it to her.

She returned to her armchair, shooing off the family's Legal cat that had taken her fireside seat while she was gone (a Legal cat has many more and much sharper claws than an ordinary cat). Opening the parcel revealed it to be a ring, a hollow cylinder of burnished metal, too small to be a crown (even for a hobbit) and too loose for a bangle or serviette ring. Puzzled, Rhiannon scratched at her furry feet and slowly re-examined the parcel wrappings looking for a letter or some explanatory note.

A moment later she threw the ring into the fire, as she had remembered something that Garry the Grey, a wandering book lending wizard had once told her.

The fire flared up briefly, casting across the burrow walls running sentences of too fast to be read rune like shadows. Retrieving the ring from the fire, Rhiannon could now see, inside and outside, the ring fairly blazed with writing.

It was a book contract.  
A magical book contract!

After reading it through twice (to understanding it's Elvish legalese), Rhiannon drew herself to her full height of three foot nine, and in front of the full length mirror hanging beside the fireplace she announced to no one in particular but to the world in general,

"I'm Rhiannon Lemony Persnickety",  
"Short Story Writer of the Shire no longer"

For indeed she was!  
She held a contract for a magic cycle of Epic Quest Trilogies, with an option of extending to a further 'cycle' of trilogies.

With a multi-book contract in hand Rhiannon Lemony Persnickety could stand tall among the wizards, gentry and other great men of the Shire.

Watching her reflection by firelight, Rhiannon was sure she had grown an inch taller already.

#### **Notes on the Rhiannon Lemony Persnickety story**

I entered a slightly different version of this story as one of the 2005 MC3 Flash fiction entries. With a later revision I was able to squeeze in a bit more story and still bring it off in just on the 500 word limit. In Rhiannon I mention (and lightly defame?) three of my occasional work colleagues. They have worked at EMSAD as casuals from time to time. I was challenged to write this piece because the 'Rhiannon' frequently suggested that I should read ALL the Lemony

Snickets books because they are funny. I hope my story amuses.

## **A Basenji Tale Piece**

### **Thoughts on the Mathematics of Dogs**

*Recently there was a posting to the Email group 'ABC SCIENCE MATTERS' on the concept of non-human intelligence and taking as read that what you choose to count as important might affect how you would approach applying 'Science' to the observed Universe, the question was asked what sort of Mathematics would a Dog come up with. The following is my response.*

In a relatively 'natural' breed of dog, i.e. not selectively bred for 'fashion' or with the associated physical and intellectual defects that selective breeding and other gene pool narrowing traditions, to emphasise single characteristics etc., behaviour that can be observed in a dingo like Basenji can be seen as suggestive that mathematical perception may be a non-human ability.

Viz several pertinent points about the behaviour of Mystique the Anglo-Australian Killer Basenjjs and her several predecessors;

1. Instinctively loose food supplied at one spot is invariably taken away in sample sized chunks to a 'safe spot' to eat, can be seen to be repeated by a solo dog until bowl is cleared i.e. the beast must have some sense of numbers in that it can discriminate 'part' from 'whole' and decide whether the individual parts differ from the whole.
2. The Basenjjs can and does climb to achieve desired outcomes, i.e. it can plan and put into effect a scheme that involves coordinating vision with some sense of three dimensions, as opposed to just seeing/smelling food and following a trail to it. This suggests that they are able to assemble some sort of 'image of the world' within their own braincase!
3. Basenjjs vision is probably not hyper acute, but it is focused on 'movement' rather than 'steady state' i.e. Ben visually diminished by cataracts from an early age, could be found watching (and chasing) small ants. Dom, when taken for a moonlit walk was Very Interested in chasing a mouse, grey mouse against grey sand/concrete.

This leads me to consider that Academic dogs would have come up with forms of Calculus, Relativity and 'motional' Cosmologies earlier than would primate intellects, who until recently were more concerned with judging more stationary matters such as whether 'that



fruit was the ripe colour yet' and 'how far to that next tree branch'.

Warming to the thought, I would presume that in addition to beating Newton, Kepler and Einstein, they would probable arrive at a theory of transition of species ahead of Charles Darwin.

Hows that for a Monograph, amazing enough?

Woof, Woof!

### **The Events of Tuesday 23 August, 2005**

For the last month or so we have been without a security screen door. Not that great a problem when the weather has been cool, but a security screen door does give you the reassurance of being able to open your front door without giving unconditional entry to strangers. On Monday 22 August **Margaret Nicholson** (I went to Gore Hill TAFE and UNSW with her) emailed me about starting a SF&F discussion group near Newtown. She also added that she was working at North Sydney Library and that she had been keeping the SF and Fantasy books that would otherwise be thrown out, and that she was prepared to give me these books for the Sydney Futurians / Sydney Freecon etc. As Margaret had the use of a Library car that night, she was able to drive them to my place. So I ended up with a delivery of five boxes of books, which when sorted were; Two of Fantasy, Two of SF and one of Techno-thrillers, TV tie-in and Military SF books. In all, over 110 books!

As Mystique is 'man phobic' I thought Margaret's visit would be a good opportunity to introduce her to more people. **Wrong, Wrong, Wrong.** Mysti bolted out the front door and it took mother and I 15 minutes to get her back. Some of this mum spent trying to cajole her off the middle of a busy road. Not 15 minutes that I would care to repeat! The life expectancy of a staying old dog is not much, even if it survives the traffic and makes it to a pound or to a Vet to have it's microchip Id read. Mystique unfortunately has the road sense of a half-brick, for 'security' she hides under cars!

### **Second Green Page - Political**



an indoor and an outdoor 'probe'. Significantly its sensitivity is such that it reads to a tenth of a degree Celsius (and possibly Fahrenheit as well).

As the dog sleeps outside, over a few weeks I have been observing the temperature at night on a more or less hourly basis, between TV programs, calls of nature, letting the dog out, putting the dog out at night etc.

The outside probe is usually on a flat wooden surface i.e. fully exposed to the air above or sometimes it slips down the crack between the brickwork and wooden shelf to hang, semi sheltered.

### Observations / conclusions

1. Hanging semi sheltered it records 'outside' temperatures that are usually about two degrees cooler than inside, i.e. energy flowing through the double brick wall.

2. When correctly exposed, of late it is been 2 or 3 degrees warmer outside at 1 am than at 8 am, well after the Sun has risen. The temperature a few hours before 8 am is usually 1 to 3 degrees cooler. I.e. coldest part of the night is not the middle of the night, but somewhat closer to the dawn

### Observed Anomalous Temperature rises?

3. On the night of the 30 June Storm I got home at around 11 pm, found the indoor temperature to be 16.8 and the outdoor temperature to be over 19 degrees (checked three times) instead of colder out than in as I would have expected

4. Last night (July 24) saw the temperature outside 'bump up' by 3 to 4 degrees (12 ish to 16 plus) as gusty windy weather arrived. At this time several taps heard to be dripping, suggestive of a pressure drop?

5. Have noticed the temperature outside 'bump up' by 1 or 2 degrees, on investigation, lower temperature was 'clear sky' and higher was 'clouded out'

My questions are, how much of this observed temperature variance is due to Atmospheric pressure changes at a constant energy state and how much is due to an orderly flow of 'lots' of heat routinely venting into the night being temporarily bottled up.

Any subscribers know what is going on here?

GPD

## Final Gray page

*This is something I posted to ABC SCIENCE MATTERS, some of my observations on recent weather.*

I Hope this does not annoy, but I have been sick at home since Wednesday and a cold does tend to make you sensitive to temperature. At home I have a thermometer with an LCD readout giving results from

The rest of this page is provided for your notes toward  
Mailing Comment notes on Transcendental Basenji  
Sermons and Enlightenment Volume 1 number 14

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