

A Brave New TBS&E 32?

A mailing for #247 consisting mostly of delayed mailing comments due to some neglected 2008 ANZAPA issues, #242 to #246

Editorial

From December 22 to December 24, 2008 I read through mailing 246. It was really the first time since (June?) that I felt I had enough uncommitted time to commence ‘re-engaging’ with the full ANZAPA consciousness. My employer, the very nearly financially (and morally) bankrupt NSW Govt has graciously allowed me some time off, via a December 24, 2008 to January 8, 2009 as a compulsory office closure. Very soon reading #246 I encountered a problem, a problem similar to that of many a traveller returning home and starting to pay attention once again to the news from home. So much seems to have changed within ANZAPA and the outside world during the time I ‘left’ to pay greater attention to Freecon matters and it’s aftermath. Who are these new people? What is this that they have been talking about in my absence? Has my room been let out etc.? To re-commencing making mailing comments at #246 just won’t make much sense, so what I’m going to try to do is to go back to where I left off and try to read through all the mailings and make cogent comments (you hope). I have in the past likened sitting down to read an ANZAPA mailing over one weekend to the experience of spending a weekend con in a fan lounge. I guess this is going to be like spending a Worldcon in a fan lounge? Good practice for 2010?

The plan at this stage (Dec. 25) is for this issue to be very nearly all mailing comments and for it to be finished in time to go out in February with a more usual TBS&E issue, reportage on Sydney SF and all that.

Commuting to and from work in this week before Christmas (after the weekend of the Summer Solstice), sitting on the very nearly empty Train, reading two or three reading individual newsletters from #246 on the Bus to work / waiting / Train / waiting Train / waiting / Bus home, my reaction to reading news from ‘home’, latest news first, oldest news still to be read provoked the story that follows.

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Some Original Fiction (suggested by my current situation)

Coming Home by Garry Dalrymple

As a child in a sleeping bag under a summer night's sky I would urge the Stars to move, not shatter and fall like shooting stars, but to move under my will and dictation. They never did. They sat crystaline and unmoved, not one prepared to break ranks an shift a little just on my say so.

Through the port hole windows on the observation deck I can see stars move, they bunch towards where we have come from and thin towards where we are heading. Sol ever on the Cross hairs. I alone remain to walk the decks and corridors of the Starship Brigham Young. Six months of ship days away from a Planet near Kolob, and six more months to Earth.

I'm coming home!

For company I have only the unwavering dials of the flight deck.

As I walk the silent corridors and darkened labs of the ship, lit only by 'all clear' green lights, maintaining a watch routine, the hum of the Anti-Dilation drive seems to differ in pitch but not much in volume through the ship. It and the three empty cryo-containers containers reproach me constantly. Thirteen pods, for twelve and for me. Was I selected by lot to play the role of Judas at our last pre-flight dinner? Soon the Drive will shut off and the Brigham Young will coast, in normal space and even this company will cease.

What other role have I served as Husband / Captain of this mission since I was chosen by lot for this mission?

In spite of the Logic, Efficiency and long understood Social Dynamics dictated that the crew for the Brigham Young, our first Anti-Dilation Drive extra Solar Starship should be all female, I was chosen by lot to be on this mission. I was qualified, but barely.

It happened this way. With the new Drive unit installed the physicists had said that while we would be travelling 'Faster than Light', we could be away on our mission for an unknowable number of years of subjective time, while for those on earth only a season or two had past. At this point the Prophet and the Apostles in Salt Lake City intervened and insisted. It would be unconscionable to Church and State to send twelve of our Sisters out into the dark and the unknown even unto a planet near Kolob without the comfort of a priesthood holder. So my Priesthood and Y chromosome were my ticket to Space, ahead of hundreds of better Scientifically qualified Sisters

Or perhaps was it some ancient patriarchal idea reborn, like a reptile thought still lodged in a mamellian brain, that a Man must be in charge of a ship of women sent forth to mission or explore new found worlds?

Was there also a fear not stated that we on the Brigham Young could be stranded on alien shores and need to found our own new Eden?

With the new Drive unit the physicists said that we could be away on mission for years, while on earth only a season had past.

So our final meal before take off was both a last supper farewell to Earth and a wedding feast for a husband and twelve new brides, aged 20 to 60.

I hope that the reports we have prepared will exonerate me, as a Captain and a Husband, but the memory of the three sister wives left behind, buried in alien soil and under an alien Sun are always with me.

The babies growing in my wives are a comfort. The Sister wives have all agreed, the first names for the first three girls of our family have already been chosen. They will commemorate our lost sisters. Most of my wives will return to their previous lives, but through the children we will remain sealed as a family.

I have long since ceased playing over the tapes and the report that will be read first by the Prophet President the Apostles and counsellors before being released to the gentile scientific community. We left in secrecy from Utah Space port and so will our mission's report be received. Only later will it be released to gentile world as Testimony?

Closer now to earth the consequences of the Anti Time Dilation Drive become apparent. Before the flight the physicists warned us that the path was certain but what we would experience was unpredictable.

With the Drive turned off there is now News from Earth arriving each watch! But I have none to share it with! Due to the lingering effects of the Drive news sent last is arriving received first, did not Jesus say 'the First shall be last' in the kingdom of heaven?

I have news to read now, but it makes little sense, it is like reading the chapters of a novel, last chapter first, then next last.

I will have to wait a bit longer before I can know what sort of a world I and my nine remaining wives will return to, what progress or developments in the fields of their expertise, the professional world that they must return to? A Black President in America? And only a few Moose are uneasy? Now how did that happen. I will have to wait for the day before Yesterday's news, Tomorrow.

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Mailing Comments from ANZAPA Issue Number 242 - Vale Arthur C. Clarke

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Mailing Comments from ANZAPA Issue Number 246 - All we ANZAPAns: Denvention 2008

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Something of a Report on the 2008 Sydney

Travellers Tales

As you may know from my previous Travellers tales postings my daily work day routine involve transit by train between Campsie and Bankstown and this does expose me to a diversity of the human experience. Habitually I choose to travel at the front of the train's second carriage from the front of the train. This usually means that I end a train trip with the closest carriage doors opening just near the lifts from platform to station exit. On the 24th of December I noted *This usually to no (Being part of an email sent to a Sydney Futurian contacts and 2008 Sydney members, with the November meeting notice)*

Garry's Original Fiction

(From the Short Story Competition at 2008 Sydney Freecon)