

# C H U N D E R !

September 5, 1978

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Terry Hughes for TAFF! Australia in '83! Perth in '80!

[illegible]

AND THE WINNERS ARE....

No, not the Hugo Awards - you can get those out of AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION NEWS - but the FAAN Awards Results (courtesy Leigh Edmonds & Bruce Pelz).

Best Editor: ROB JACKSON (Don D'Amassa, Terry Hughes, Victoria Wayne,  
Mike Glycer, Donn Brazier, No Award)

Best Writer: BOB SHAW (Don D'Amassa, Susan Wood, Mike Glicksohn & Don Thompson, No Award)

Best Artist (Humorous): ALEXIS GILLILAND (Derek Carter, Harry Bell, Grant Canfield, Bill Rotzler, Dan Steffan, No Award)

Best Artist (non-Humorous): JIM SHULL (Taral, Jim McLeod, Jim Odbert,  
Mike Streff, Al Sirosis, No Award)

Best Letter-of-comment Writer: MIKE GLICKSOHN (Avedon Carol, Harry Warner, Jr., Don D'Ammassa, No Award, Jessica Amanda Salmonson)

Best Single Issue: MAYA 14 (Simulacrum 7, Delta Psi 1, Fanthology 76 & Spanish Inquisition 10, No Award)

ANDY PORTER IS STILL AT IT

Andy's latest sortie on the question of professionalisation of fanzines is a photo-reproduction of an introduction to a GREGG PRESS two-volume edition of LOCUS. Andy doesn't note the mis-spelling of Niekas, but he does highlight the following two sentences written by Charlie Brown:

'In 1976 I decided I liked doing Locus more than I liked being an electrical engineer. We survived the massive cut in income and turned the magazine into a professional undertaking.' (AP's underline)

The question is, of course, whether a professional undertaking is the same thing as a professional magazine...

## THE SPEEDER REEKS

(Perry Middlemiss writes)

Seems I finally got around to thinking about what you had written in the latest issue of Chunder! concerning the lack of letter-writing in Australian fandom. I don't think that this applies only to genzines, such as those produced by John Bangsund and Ron Clarke recently.

So far this year, I have produced two issues of the AUSFA clubzine, totalling some 400 copies. Of those 400 possible locs I have received 10, with only one of those coming from overseas. I will admit that there have possibly been a few things which have turned people off replying - such as no obvious numbering system (though it is there) and the title changes (which is going to sort itself out with the

next issue - around the middle of next month). But one reply in 40 seems a little low even for first issues.

Of the letters that I have received from people in Australia, two have come from Irwin Hirsh and two from Nev Angove and two from Leanne Frahm, and one each from Paul Stokes, Paul Anderson and Peter Knox. Not really a very good turn up for the books. There have, of course, been a number of people who have thanked me personally, but the vast proportion of free copies has met almost total silence.

It's very difficult to see the main reasons behind the general lack of letter-writing in Australian fandom. It could be that some fans have the opinion that they automatically deserve to receive all new fanzines that are published in Australia, just because they are who they are. That's an extreme view, of course, but I think that that opinion does exist in some fans' minds.

I don't believe that postage costs are a major part of the problem. If you were to receive and loc every fanzine published in Australia you wouldn't have to write more than one letter a week, and that's probably an overestimate.

It's a real problem and I sometimes wonder how many letters people like you, who don't publish letters, get in reply to their fanzines.

(22/8/78)

JF: So far Chunder! hasn't included letters because that didn't seem appropriate: in future letters may be a more important part of it, if that is the sort of thing readers feel is worthwhile. To answer your last question first, Perry, I do get quite a few letters regarding Chunder!, but these are usually contributions or information about who's sleeping with whom. Only about half of this stuff gets into Chunder!, with the omissions being due to uncertainty or to the info being out-of-date. These letters don't provide all the information I would like - while convention reports are fine, I would like reports on other kinds of fanac - and of course they are not usually letters-of-comment. ASFN, which has a much larger circulation, and for which I do the letter-column, doesn't receive very many letters wither (just about all are published) but then a newszine isn't really likely to attract locs.

MAYA 14 (see above) was regarded as the best single issue of a fanzine in 1977. Rob Jackson reports (in MAYA 15) receiving 182 letters on MAYA 14. He has a mailing list of 470, of whom only 100 are subscribers. You have a long way to go to match that rate of return! A sufficiently interesting (i.e. market-wise) fanzine will usually draw a stack of locs, but if you have the wrong mailing-list, you certainly won't get the letters you deserve. On the other hand, if you publish a boring and/or crappy fanzine, there's probably no mailing-list in the world that will produce a large response. People still do produce boring/crappy fanzines but (as Harry Warner notes in EGG 11) these are mainly circulated in apas, where they are less likely to be ignored, or lambasted for the bilge they are.

With three apas trundling along in Australia there is plenty of room for the rotten fanzine-publisher to do his thing and not learn that actually what he is writing is of no interest to anyone else. The genzine publisher learns a lot quicker. Perhaps the number of apas in Australia is enough to ensure that a lot of people never bother to learn how to produce a fanzine properly. This is especially true now that so many fans get their pubbing start in an apa.

What's been said above about fanzine-publishing applies to letters in two ways: there's first little incentive to write letters when you can so easily publish your own magazine - in an apa, where no one has to go through the drudgery or retyping your boring letter (and therefore decides not to), and of course if fanzines are boring, no one will write letters - and certainly won't learn through experience what constitutes



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a decent letter of comment.

(George R R Martin wrote to Leigh Edmonds, who passed it on)

One of my short stories, "With Morning Comes Mistfall" was reprinted in the Australian Women's Weekly, the November 2, 1977 issue. They paid well enough and did a nice job, but I've been going mad trying to get a few copies of the issue my story appeared in. So far I've only managed to secure one rather-the-worse-for-wear copy, but I'd like at least two more. I've written to both the New York and Australian offices of Australian Consolidated Press, which bought the story, only to be told no more copies are available.

If there is any fan in Australia who has a copy of the magazine, or could find one in a used book bin or the like, I would be glad to buy it and pay any postage and handling costs. Just write me at Burnick & Martin Manor, 2266 Jackson, Dubuque, Iowa, 52001, USA. It bothers me to think that it's so difficult to obtain a few copies of my own publications, and I'd be most appreciative if someone in Aussie fandom could help me out.

Thank you.

(~ ly 12, 1978)

JF: I know this will be a cinch for you, Keith Curtis, but maybe some others will also succeed....

(Mervyn R Binns writes)

This time you have gone too far. Not only have you printed news in your technicolour rag that no decent fanzine has time to get into print, you have the temerity to make news up.

The Australia Science Fiction Club - now I ask you! This is a pure piece of fantasy that you have conjured up to spark off some new controversy. I know you were very disappointed that the defunct organization known as COMORG never got started and took over all Australian fandom, but you do not have to dream up this new mob just for spite.

If you do not retract your statement that the honourable Mr Johnson and myself were associated with such an organization, you will be hearing from my solicitors, Messrs Hagg and Gobbling, forthwith.

Yours furiously, Mervyn R Binns  
(8/6/78)

JF: Since I have sighted a document referring to the formation of the proposed Australian Science Fiction Club, which named Binns and Johnson as officers, I'm inclined to believe that the club was being set up at least as much (in fact even more so) as I am prepared to believe that SYNCON '79 received a letter from Robert and/or Virginia Weinlein accepting their invitation for RAH to be Guest of Honour at SYNCON '79. But I certainly won't reveal why the ASFC was being set up. Your secret is safe with me, Merv.

There's little reason to lament the demise of COMORG when we can all sit around and laugh about the Australian Science Fiction Foundation instead.

## NOOZ

The October meeting of the Nova Mob is devoted to a symposium on George Turner's BELOVED SON. We hope that as many readers of George's book as possible will turn up (3a/19 Marine Parade, St Kilda, 7.30pm, first Tuesday of the month). The no-smoking rule will be relaxed, but ~~no~~-smokers are asked to remember that most Nova Mob attendees ~~do~~ not smoke, and prefer to keep it that way. // In THE AUSTRALIAN's War

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of the Worlds competition, one of the winners is J Harris of Joslin, SA - someone we know? // Terry Carr is to be the replacement for Robert Sheckley at the Writers' Workshop in Sydney early next year.// IGUANACON BLUES (FAPA 164) reports on troubles with IGUANACON you wouldn't believe.

SYNCON '78

(a first report)

Keith Curtis wanted to be chairman of a relaxacon so he could say afterwards that he'd run a convention without the traumas of organising a programme.

Well, SYNCON was a relaxacon, but it did have a programme: the subject was humour in science fiction - appropriate as the SSFF awards the Pat Terry Award for humour in SF from time to time. It turned out to be a series of phot summaries, as humour seems to become invisible when placed on the microscope slide.

The film programme included HELLZAPPON and BEL BOOK AND CANDLE, which were good choices. The motel had a restaurant (and a menu) in quite astounding, not to say fantastic, bad taste. The Southern decor included such choice items as Ku Klux Klan memorabilia.

Guest of honour Robin Johnson may have given Chairman Keith Curtis an awkward few moments when he came out as a homosexual in the course of a rambling speech on Changes since Aussiecon.

Bert Chandler donated programme books from MARCON at which he was Guest of Honour and which contains much bibliographic material on Chandler to the DUFF/GUFF auction.

Attendance was around 60 and was about the maximum the venue could have handled. A good idea was Sunday's barbecue banquet around the pool.

(A second report is expected; rather than holding your collective breath, try 147 choruses of 'Why Are We Waiting?')

## BOOK REVIEWS

Penguin recently published four 'science fiction books'. One of these, half of a Terry Carr Best of the Year collection, is not worth talking about here - who would be interested in half of an old book? The two novels, THE POLLINATORS OF EDEN and THE LAST STARSHIP FROM EARTH, both by John Boyd (with a recommended price of \$2.25 each), are highly regarded - but since they are virtually a decade old, they have had plenty of time to gain some sort of reputation. The only reasonably new book is a reprint of Pierrot Press's GREAT BALLS OF FIRE, edited and written (if that's not too strong a word) by Harry Harrison. The subtitle, A History of Sex in Science Fiction Illustration, is misleading, for GREAT BALLS OF FIRE is simply a pile of illustrations, usually with some sexual content, drawn largely from comicbooks (and many of those from METAL HURLANT), and some text which is at best cute. There may be something interesting about the history of sex in science fiction illustration, but it is not revealed by a pandering volume such as this.

Speaking of pandering, I recently suffered CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. I had thought that one couldn't go lower than the supports (JERSEY, ISLAND OF CONTRASTS, followed by a pseudo-art film on the making of bread), but then came the feature. In the August issue of Future Ursula LeGuin has some complaints about this and STAR WARS (and gets completely confused about Leni Riefenstahl and the ending of STAR WARS), but while she fixes upon the irrationality of CEOTTK as a movie, she doesn't make the point which I would have thought obvious, that CEOTTK is not only irrational itself, but exults and encourages



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irrationality.

### CoAville

John & Sally Bangsund, PO Box 230, Kew Victoria 3101  
Nev Angove, PO Box 162, West Ryde, NSW 2114

### FANZINE REVIEWS

In this issue I review two recent British fanzines. Next time I will deal with three apa mailings (FAPA, ANZAPA, and APPLESAUCE if it still exists - the most recent monthly mailing seems to have been number two, dated June). The issue after that will be devoted to recent Australian fanzines, if there have been any...

EGG 11 (May 1978, from Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Drive, Pawlish, Devon, UK, for the usual of \$1) and MAYA 15 (June (?) 1978, from Rob Jackson, 71 King John St, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5XR, UK (at least for a while), for the usual or 80¢ from Robin Johnson) are partial explanations of the results reported on page 1 of this Chunder! EGG and MAYA are rather similar in terms of their contributors, but each has its own appeal.

Of the two, I think I prefer EGG. EGG is duplicated, and Peter Roberts doesn't bother to number the pages - always a good sign. Although both fanzines are well-illustrated, Jim Barker's illustrations for the start of Peter's TAFF report are the best I've seen in years, though I still think Steve Stiles is the best illustrator of trip reports. It has been some time since a complete TAFF report was published, I think, and this one looks as though it really will deserve semi-permanent preservation. The other lengthy contribution to EGG is a John Brosnan piece which is down to his usual standard.

Both the Brosnan and the Roberts piece are good because (or at least partly because) the result gives the impression of having been produced in a most relaxed manner: though they are written carefully, the scaffolding has been taken away.

In his editorial Peter Roberts has a capsule (well, pill actually) summary of numbered fandoms in Britain which helps me to understand how easily I got out of touch with British fandom in the late 60s-early 70s. In other words, it is a useful guide, which is more than can be said for some other systems. The letter column in EGG is very well put together, though the continued expression of aversion to the poetry of Raleigh Evans Multog makes me suspect that the writers have never come across Fred Hurter's fanzines.

MAYA - well, MAYA Tries Hard r. Offset, pages numbered, nice little contents listing and all that stuff. But inside this pseudo-professionalism there's a real fanzine trying to get out. Both Rob Jackson & Peter Weston have their SUNCON trips to discuss, and these are a good deal better than a Platt/White exchange which threatens to bring back the PSYCHOTIC/SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW days. This and a short review of DREAM OF WESSEX are as out of place in MAYA as a Chester S Geler story in ASTOUNDING (even though that happened), and it is a relief to find Bob Shaw popping up with the kind of piece that wins him FAAN awards. The letter column of MAYA is disappointing: perhaps it is my strange perception, but the quality of the letters seemed immensely variable (from the humorous to the maudlin, with a few too many of the latter) and given the large number from which the selection was made, a slightly higher level might have been expected. The EGG letter column was far more enjoyable for me.

Both of these fanzines are worth getting (to understate the case). The editors work at them quite hard - they care - so that EGG and MAYA appear irregularly - the sort of schedule that INNUENDO (to pick one of Peter Roberts' favourite fanzines) used to follow. Now if only Rob Jackson could get the science fiction out of MAYA.....