

chunder!

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W H A T B L A I R R A M A G E S H O U L D H A V E S A I D

On the last two pages of Chunder! volume 2, number 11 is an exchange of letters between Blair Ramage and myself. In my reply to Blair's initial letter (my letter is dated December 3) I asked some questions about the Ditmars. The date is now January 1, 1979, and there is still no reply from Blair Ramage, or from Peter Toluzzi, chairman of SYNCON '78, to whom a copy of my letter was sent. I construct here, for their benefit, and for the benefit of curious readers, the letter either Ramage or Toluzzi should have written in reply to my letter of 3/12/1978.

Dear John,

I'm sorry that you don't yet understand what is going on with the Ditmars. The categories for 1978 are BEST AUSTRALIAN FICTION, BEST INTERNATIONAL FICTION, BEST AUSTRALIAN FANZINE and BEST AUSTRALIAN FAN WRITER. In addition there's the William Atheling Award, which I have occasionally and mistakenly referred to in the past as a Ditmar.

As for the rules and dates, they are as follows:

1. The invitation of nominations is no guarantee that the category as listed will appear on the final ballot. The Awards sub-committee reserves the right to sub-divide a category (e.g., Australian sf into long and short sf).
2. Works nominated for the awards which may not be generally available to the voters (i.e., a fanzine or other limited circulation publication) should have a copy of the work, with date and place of origin, included with the nomination. It is the intention of the Awards sub-committee to make a copy of each work which appears on the final ballot available to the voters, WHERE THIS IS POSSIBLE.
3. Works for consideration should have become generally available in Australia in 1978.
4. Nominations close 1st March 1979.
5. Voting closes 20th July 1979.

I don't think we could be much clearer than that (except perhaps that the notion of 'generally available' may produce some problems), and I am surprised that you are not aware of this since all of it was published in SYDNEY 2, distributed quite a few months ago. I don't think a convention committee is obliged to repeat and repeat information for the benefit of those who don't listen.

You may of course have been confused by my reference to publishing 'a full list of nominations at the end of December or early in January.' I meant by this only a list of nominations to date - the full list won't be known until after March 1.

I hope this provides all the information you need

Yours etc, Blair Ramage or Peter Toluzzi.

Yes, that's the letter Ramage or Toluzzi could have written - but they didn't (and haven't so far, the date being January 9). Peter Toluzzi may well have a letter later in this issue, but as yet I don't know its contents. However, I discovered that Bruce Gillespie and I were not the only ones confused about the DITMARS: Eric Lindsay, in a much longer letter, wrote as follows "Regarding DITMAR nomination dates, I thought that was settled at UNICON IV but since no one kept records, it is a bit hard to be sure. Voting forms have to be distributed at least 6 weeks before the con, that I recall. Also I thought the nominations were to close 2 weeks before distribution of the votes, but that is based on memory of the UNICON IV. Has anyone a record of the business meeting? Probably not, which is why the next business meeting will be recorded on tape."

Well of course it has been the practice for years to record everything on tape - it is just that the last two Australian National cons have not bothered about this helpful little aide-memoire.

And, for all of those who had forgotten SYDNEY 2, it is a comfort to find that someone as active in Sydney fandom as Eric Lindsay hasn't been provided with a copy (he was overseas at the time it was distributed, I think).

There's more on the DITMARS - and on DUFF - in this issue, mostly new stuff, but let's have a break, and read through some friendly and newsy letters.

L*E*T*T*E*R*S

CHAS JENSEN (a recent letter)

It struck me that one of the things that fans in Adelaide and Perth suffer from the isolation of the post in this country. The importance of the DUFF issue is echoed by the fact that you were prepared to devote so much of a single issue to its ramifications, but it is only when things are reported that their importance is recognised by those not immediately involved in this dispute. In this case it means that a large number of fans here, and presumably in Perth, Brisbane and Hobart will only come to be aware of the gravity of the bickering when and if they come to read the relevant issue of Chunder! It's a lot like the policy pursued (more deliberately) by the magnates of the Australian press and TV news ... i.e. a thing does not assume its correct proportions until it has been reported. Therefore, if it isn't reported, it may be regarded as unimportant. The most glaring example of the sort of thing I am referring to was the occupation (earlier this year) of the Seabrook reactor site by the member organizations of the Clamshell Alliance ... some 16 000 of them. This event was never reported by the Australian press and it was when FOE publications publicised it that people became aware that a significant event had occurred in the campaign against shoddy reactors and their builders. The excuse finally offered by the owners of the media in this country, for nonreportage, was that to do so would have damaged the government's case at a time when the negotiations with the traditional owners of Abiluka and Ranger had reached a sensitive area and public opinion would have intruded. But I seem to have gotten off the track of what I was saying.

Although the parallel with the press barons isn't exact, there is still the problem within local fandom of what to report and not to report. For this reason Iohn, I am pleased that Chunder! has survived to become a comprehensive newszine. My only worry is that it might remain oriented largely towards news from the two active states only ... it would be more a binding mechanism, I think, if it were to report fairly widely on events.

Ah hell, maybe I'm just glad to have some sort of link with activity in

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the rest of Australia that isn't totally coloured by the editor's opinions. Things tend to come through in such small fragments that way.

(JF: It is bad if one newszine is the only source of information, but the absence of another regular fanzine having interstate distribution (other than ASFN, which concentrates upon pro news) makes the situation worse, and the burden for Chunder! somewhat greater, since it has to serve as an oversize lettercolumn.

I am concerned that Chunder! tends to report news mainly from Sydney and Melbourne - but then that's the news I get - and if things happen elsewhere I can only report them if I hear about them. Another concern is that the mailing list for either Sydney or Melbourne is as large as the list for the rest of Australia put together, so far as Chunder! goes. I would like to reach more Western Australians, but so far I only get to a handful of them.

With respect to Seabrook/Clamshell - I didn't even know this had been reported out here. I get my info in this area from WIN, and I recommend WIN (503 Atlantic Ave/5th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11217, USA at \$US15 a year for about 44 issues) to all readers. They are always broke, so send \$20, and you'll get value for money out of this 16-24 page near-weekly.

But your letter has spurred me in another area - and I'm pleased to report that from the next issue Marc Ortlieb will reporting on what goes on in the Australian apas (ANZAPA, APES, APPLESAUCE - that's strict alphabetical order, not discrimination against Sydney), which cuts down on my influence. I believe that newzines should change editors fairly often - or at least that the 'news' shpuld'n't always be reported by the same person - and maybe I can partition Chunder! into chunks which are heavily influenced by others. But now, back to Chas' letter.)

One thing I did notice in all the back and forth over the DUFF business and the worthiness of various people to stand and win the trip. Even Leigh Edmonds seems to think that only faneds, loc writers and other general publishing freaks constitute 'active' fans. The Americans did not subscribe to this theory when they sent Rusty Develin to AUSSIECON as the DUFF winner. Rusty is somewhat notorious for the fact that he writes nothing, not even letters. So why did he get sent to Australia as an 'active' fan?

The short answer lies in Rusty's own words, as were published in the interview with him in SPECTRE 1. He has been 'chasing conventions' since the 50s, which means that he has been a fan longer than a majority of Aussie fen, me included.

Which makes the Aussie position, with its implicit assumption that the only active fen publish, something of an opinionated position not based on fact. Given that, would any of the writers on the DUFF issue change their opinion at to whether or not there were any worthy candidates for the 'prize'? Leigh's assertion that there are no fen 'active enough to deserve' to win is fairly true in terms of publishing, with the possible exception of Bruce Gillespie who everyone seems to have forgotten about. With an expanded definition though, there might be more candidates worth considering for the award. It isn't gauranteed, though.

(JF: I'll save the rest of this letter for the news section. The last two DUFF winners from Australia, Christine Ashby and Paul Stevens, are in many ways far more convention fans than publishing fans. You may have a point, matey, but how about coming up with some names? But speaking of DUFF

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A N D Y P O R T E R F O R D U F F !
.....

but the main advantage of fanzine fans winning travel funds is that they are more likely to publish reports of their trips. According to WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG 2, you can buy the following trip reports from LASFS Inc., 11513 Burbank Blvd, N Hollywood, CA 91601: A FAKE FAN IN LONDON (Bob Madle) - \$1, TAFF BAEDEKER (Don Ford) - \$2, THE SQUIRREL'S TALE (Ron Ellik) - \$1, ATOM ABROAD (Arthur Thomson) - \$3, THE MOFFATT HOUSE ABROAD (Len & June Moffatt) - \$2; add 25¢ each for postage and tell 'em I sent you.)

JAMES STYLES (extracts from a long and elderly letter)

I was interested to see the numerous appearances of that James Styles in the 'zine. Perhaps I have finally cracked that thin veneer of olde guard faanishment and varnish of educational brilliance that the real John Foyster lurks under?

Perhaps Peter Toluzzi or some of those younger fen would be able to enlighten us olde and tired fans on the 'frequency of quickies' at ANZAPACON? (No, I don't wish to argue that hallowed title but I can mention that an argument did occur on that subject at the Adelaide University Bistro last Friday night between Roman Orzanski and myself. The noive of that boid saying that he was more old guard than me!)

I think Tim Dawson should realize the problems confronting any pictorial representation of the story of THE LORD OF THE RINGS. Personally, I would rather see an animated version of BORED OF THE RINGS.

Lee Harding's letter amused me. No, I'm not mud-slinging like certain underfed goblin-related fans! I refer to the fact that a writer can write a damn good or atrocious story and not have hidden meanings or themes (or lectures - my pet hate especially when I disagree with the writer's viewpoint) belting the poor reader between the eyes.

I glean from THE WEEPING SKY review that you consider deinlein takes the easy way out with his stories? Perhaps you find him a hack? (Or perhaps this is another 'cavalier dismissal', thank you Tim Dawson, of a damn good story teller?) I find his characterizations adequate, anyway!

(JF: One of the disappointments of the early returns in the CHUNDERPOLL nominations is that no one has put me up in the 'Reader's Choice' category for the badmouthing of the year in my assessment of Robert A deinlein at the UNICON IV business session. Fame just passes us by, James me boy!)

'Of such stuff are reporters for TRUTH made!' Does this mean we will have Heart Balm and a topless model in the next edition of Chunder!? Gosh, I'm getting sweaty palms already!

Your SFC review was very good. If you could write in such a vein and then disguise it as fan fiction I'm sure I would print it immediately! But then Bruce Gillespie is such an easy character to write about, but sic (le) it to him anyway.

CHAS JENSEN (again - this time from an older letter, but picking up a theme from James's letter)

The short report on ANZAPACON was a bit of a 'barebones' affair, but I suppose that it is the result of space requirements rather than the laziness or uninspiration of the writer. On that subject, I wonder if you have any idea how long Leigh is taking to process orders for the Anniversary? I wrote to him over three weeks ago and included the magic ingredient (money!), but I have yet to hear from him.

It was an interesting contrast to find the report on the life of the apa at ten years of age, along with comments on the current lack of response that is plaguing fandom in Aussie. It seems that the

contributing reason for the lack of response from local fans is the simple lack of distribution to those selfsame fans of the fanzines that are produced for Aussie. For reasons of mine (that I won't go in to here for fear of starting a pointless argument) I have come to the belief that the apas are slowly choking some of the fans' interest in fandom in Aussie.

(JF: Chas goes on at some length on this theme, but he also asks me not to print it - I hope I haven't printed much more than he wanted now! Later Chas talks about an elite group - which may well be the sort of thing James Styles had in mind with his 'olde garde'. The reason I'm bringing this up is to try to encourage someone to expand on this theme - to identify the characteristics of the 'olde garde' at length. And of course I should be glad to print the result.

As for people not writing letters of comment - Chunder! gives the lie to that. I probably print between one-third and one-half of the letters I receive (JS and CJ can testify to that!): these days I probably receive ten to fifteen letters on each Chunder!, which isn't too great as a percentage, but it's a rare day that I don't get a letter in the mail.

We shall return to the letter column and some themes in the two letters above which still haven't been dealt with. But I would like to share with you now an example of the kind of reporting I would like to carry in each issue of Chunder! Remember that I prefer to give copies for contributions - and here's Leigh Edmonds with his (I hope) regular column.)

T * H * E I * - * B * E * A * M C * O * L * U * M * N

(by Leigh Edmonds)

I've always thought that one of the most enjoyable things about going to an art gallery was the chance to say outrageous things about the art there. Having done a few paintings myself gives me the right, so I like to think, to be more critical than those who have never dipped brush in paint. This point may be debatable but anyhow one had to be more circumspect than usual with the criticism and derision of the works on show at the opening of the Space Age Art Gallery.

The Art Gallery is upstairs where the old Pulp & Nostalgia section used to be (*). It seems that business wasn't so hectic anymore so Merv put up some pegboard over the old shelves and, lo and behold, an art gallery! Merv started the gallery months ago but because of the apathy which greeted his proposal, ASFNewsletter and the fortunes of the book trade, the official opening didn't take place until 15th December - a Friday, at 7.30 pm to be precise.

Valma and I were late; we actually arrived a few minutes before the deadline but in the chaos it took ages to get our offerings strung up. The only area left was a board hidden around at the back where the light was bad, but at least the paintings were finally hung where people could see them and that was something. I was also pleased to get my paintings out of the house where they had been gathering dust and getting in the way. I hope somebody purchases them, because I don't want them back again.

At various times during the evening Merv bemoaned the fact that he hadn't invited more people or that he hadn't catered properly for those who were there. One of the reasons we go to the functions Merv has is because he caters for them so well. There's usually all sorts

(*Bangsund's obligatory Funny Remark may be made at this point. ed.)

of sandwiches, fancy dips with all sorts of savoury biscuits, little pastry things with oysters, pieces of chicken and other cold meats and other numerous delights - a far cry from the sausage rolls and party pies and biscuits served at the '66 Eastercon. If you ever get an invitation to one of Merv's things don't turn it down for anything. Fortunately Merv remembers that my tastes are stuck in '66 and he still lays on the party pies and sausage rolls with tomato sauce enough to swim in.

However, as you may have gathered, for the art gallery opening all was austerity, with potato crisps and all sorts of nuts. Merv was holding himself back for the following Monday (of which more anon) so that by the end of the evening we were all feeling stuffed with carbohydrates and fuelled by alcohol. But more about the art show.

You can of course pop up to the Gallery on the first floor (passing a T*E*R*R*I*F*I*C stellar mural on the landing) and have a look around for yourself. However it is now too late for the excitement of the opening night. One very quickly learned to talk very softly when saying anything nasty about the work you were looking at or doing swift about-faces. For example, we were looking at one work which had an airliner flying over a Tolkien landscape and I was loudly telling everybody that it wouldn't really be able to fly. Suddenly the person beside me asks "why not?" "Good grief!" I think quickly, "he's the artist! I've offended the artist! How am I going to get out of this?"

"Ah well, yes, I think the technique and the design of the painting are very good." Later I found out that the person I'd thought was the originator of that one was in fact the artist of the painting of the overlarge tank in the alien landscape. I also had a jolly time criticising that and saying that it would never work, and while I may find it easier to talk about shell traps, unwieldy structures and the manoeuvrability versus armour thickness controversy instead of impossible wing platforms you still end up with an unhappy artist. It's much better to fall back on praising other points in the work, rather than getting into arguments where aesthetics meet the laws of the physical world headon. Initiating a discussion on airbrush techniques or the difficulties of oils is an even better way out.

After a couple of close encounters of this kind I became careful with my criticism - there were a lot of whispering people around and soon most of us didn't try to talk about art at all.

The most remarkable painting there was obviously from somebody who had spent more time haunting the art galleries of Toorak than ogling the covers of ANALOG, FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION and THRILLING WONDER. It was a sort of blueish-tinged reclining woman with a skull for a head holding string which went around the necks of some clothes dummies wearing pantyhose - the really remarkable thing about the monstrosity was its \$400+ price tag. The artist of that one must have decided that the rest of us weren't up to his standard because the next time I was up there the thing had been removed. Two other paintings disappeared during the opening. Along with them went the artist who may have overheard Merv telling some of us that he expected the tone of the gallery would establish itself gradually and some of the junk would soon have to go. He probably decided that Merv was talking about him and removed himself and his paintings while he still had some dignity left.

Valma and I quickly rehung our pictures in the vacant space, since it was better lit than our first position and, having a heavy weekend ahead, were home and to bed fairly early.

On the other hand we arrived early and left late on the following Monday evening - the annual Space Age Binnye. The food was notable, the booze was free and the company enjoyable. Almost everybody who was anybody was there, even John Alderson who distinguished himself by dropping his bottle of lemonade on Valma twice. The second time it

broke all over the floor and to the general amazement it was lemonade. Merv didn't care what it was, he still had to clean up the mess. Valma and I left him with a broom in one hand, a mop in the other, and a grim look. It wasn't just the broken glass, it was the whole after-party mess he had to clean up. Still, I thought it was well worth it, Merv. Ta!

(Leigh Edmonds)

LETTERS (CONTINUED)

CHAS JENSEN (yet again)

One thing did interest me greatly in the issue I received was your review of THE WEEPING SKY, particularly the comments on the differences between the novel that Lee wrote and the one that Cassell's published. I began to wonder just how common a practice this sort of abortion copy-editing was after re-reading the introduction to FUTURE SANCTUARY, and Lee's comments on the foreword and afterword that he added at some editor's request. I don't think they make the story more interesting, but they don't detract as badly as Lee seems to imply.

It wasn't only in relation to Lee's novels that this thought carried some impact. If, as I suspect, the practice extends to the whole fiction-publishing field then it raises some interesting questions as to how much control over the final product the author has. (I cannot accept Lee's shrug-off for it may be true of the 'meaning' of the novel, but it ain't true of the plot, characters, etc. If it is, then the novel should be read before submission and rewritten where it needs it.) If the author does not approve of what is done to the novel during copy-editing, what power does he have to alter the text during the production of the galleys, before the final printing and binding. I think that there are a few other fans who, like myself, would like to know, for it might clear up a few stories. It might serve to explain some of the strange things that have found their way into print as Australian fiction.

THE GREAT GEORGE R R MARTIN STORY (PART the 468TH)

Thanks for the four issues of Chunder! you sent, and for running my letter. It seems to have paid off. Eric Lindsay wrote to tell me that he had seen the letter and secured a copy of the 11/2/77 issue of Australian Women's Weekly, in which my story appeared. So that will soon be on its way to me.

I'd still like to see at least one additional copy, however. If there is anyone down under besides Eric who has a copy and is willing to part with it, I'm still looking, and I'm still more than willing to pay for the magazine, plus any postage and handling costs.

(GRRM: Burnick and Martin Manor, 2266 Jackson, Dubuque, Iowa 52201.

George, if all the promises that were made were put into effect you would have a houseful of those damned things by now: perhaps this note will jog some memories.)

BOB SMITH

Chunder! arrived in a luvly thick envelope, and I thought 'Ah... lotsa meaty material to titillate my extremely jaded fannish and starved SoW appetite' but I was wrong: it was full of codswallop... It was indeed enough to make a tired old fan throw up, this ish of Chunder!, with its continuing sordid saga of Sydney versus Melbourne. Since I have been badly out-of-touch for a long time, twll me: has there ever been an occasion when you all got together...? (Diverting slightly: what does it cost you to put out an issue of Chunder!)

(JF: All together? How about August '75? An issue of Chunder! costs about \$20. I'm inclined to agree with your general feelings, but what about the attitude Chas Jensen expresses in his first letter above?)

fanzine Reviews

In future this column will only deal with general fanzines: Marc Ortliet will be reporting on apa-doings.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG 3 (Brian Earl Brown, 16711 Burt Rd, HASH 207, Detroit, Michigan 48219. 3/\$1 or trade. 12 pages)

Nine pages of fanzine reviews and ratings, and some other interesting jottings. The coverage isn't exactly complete, as the editor recognizes, but he's working to improve that. This nevertheless remains a very useful Buyer's Guide. There's an interesting reference to a mailorder duplicating supplies shop which sells Twiltone @ \$2.14 in quantities over ten reams (plus freight). I wonder if enough Australian fans would have an interest in that paper..... WoFan appears whenever 12 pages get together (bimonthly or more often).

THRU BLACK HOLES 4 (Michael Roden, 982 White Oak Rd., Cincinatti, Ohio, 45245, \$7.50 for 6, offset, 24 pages, published every month or so.)

This is a 'space-zine' which seems to mean that it has stuff about the Exploration of Space and quite a lot of what I think of as scribbles but others undoubtedly regard as comic art (or graphics). The magazine is really rather more complex than I've made it seem, but it doesn't turn me on. Issues not available for letters of comment.

CHAO 21 (John J Alderson, PO Box 72, Maryborough, Vic 3465. \$1 a copy of trade. 32 pages, and irregular these days - this one is October '78)

Green duplicating onto red/pink paper, even though only for one sheet, seems to me unnecessarily cruel. The cover by Chris Johnston is the best in this issue.

The contents of this issue are directed more towards straight sf than is customary: John Alderson's piece on THE STARS MY DESTINATION and Andrew arlington's on Vonnegut are substantial, rather than the light-weight sort of stuff that infests most fanzines, and even John's brief reviews of various recent paperbacks are thoughtfully brutal. There's also a short letter-column and an ALDERSON FOR GUFF plug.

The infrequency of CHAO in the past few years I've found disappointing. Although I find John's writing maddening, and all too often careless, there is usually something of substance in each issue - and this one shows just what John can produce when he isn't screwing sheep or whatever it is he does in "avelock.

GEGENSCHHEIN 36 (Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776. Available for trade and a variety of other objects. 16 pages.)

The use of colour in this issue is a little less extravagant than it has been in the past, and the result is a better-looking fanzine, I think. But with respect to content, this issue has fallen on lean times.

The artwork, as usual, is far better than that in the average Australian fanzine, but the text has been reduced to a letters-in, letters-out format, or almost so. Now Eric has some pretty readable correspondents, and Eric is a pretty fast man with a typer-key, but somehow this stuff seems to me a let-down after the kind of writing Eric does in his trip-reports. He does spend a fair amount of the last page talking about GUFF (being yet another candidate), and his remarks are pretty sensible (although I'm possibly prejudiced on some aspects of the discussion): longer pieces would make GEGENSCHHEIN even more enjoyable.

Conventional stuff

KYNECON 2.5 KYNECON 2.5 will be held on February 10 and 11, 1979, at the Darling farm at Kyneton. Site of part of BYOCON, and also of the notorious MUDCON, the farm (Pondarosa) lies on the Tylden Road some three miles (as we old fogies say) from Kyneton. Apart from driving (or hitching) there are various trains. Accommodation has been upgraded somewhat since MUDCON: attendees should however bring inflatable air-mattresses, sleeping bags, etc., and some supplies in the way of food and drink (although some basic requirements will be provided, and you can always nip in to Kyneton for the bag of chips).

Amongst already-planned program items are a faanish cricket match (perhaps not ANZAPA vs. the Rest of the World, but along those lines) and an auction (attendees are invited to bring material).

The convention/party starts around the middle of Saturday and finishes on Sunday when the last rat deserts the sinking ship.

If you wish to attend, please contact Peter Darling (26 1401, of GPO Box 4039, Melbourne) so that he knows you are coming, and you get more details on how to find the place.

Admission by donation to GUFF: all profits to GUFF.

WAYCON 79 Roy Ferguson asks me to draw to your attention the news that the membership rate for Eastern States fans attending WAYCON 79 will remain at \$10 right up to the convention. He apologises for not being able to do anything about cutting the high cost of getting to Perth. (I don't know, Roy: surely you could have persuaded Lang Hancock to buy TAA or something...) WAYCON memberships to Bob Ogden, 11 The Quarterdeck, Willetton, WA 6155.

NOREASCON 2 News Release 3 informs us that the first PR goes to the printer on December 15 and is supposed to be bulk-mailed on January 18. It's 32 pages long, with general info and more stuff about the Guests of Honour. //The first issue of the committee fanzine THE VOICE OF THE LOBSTER has already been published and mailed. The only other real news is that the committee is going to police distribution of the membership and address list carefully.

UNICON V Your hardworking editor will attend, and a report may be expected in the next Chunder!

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FANZINE REVIEWS (continued)

THE ALPHA CENTURA COMMUNICATOR III.10 (Owen K Laurion, PO Box 648, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. monthly, \$4 a year, 20 pages) is a fanzine I am unable to admire in any way.

THE LEINSTER LOUDMOUTH 2 (Bevan Casey, 8 The Taffrail, Willetton, WA 6155. For trade, I guess. 16 pages)

I didn't like the fiction. And I'm rather sensitive to a fanzine which follows a one-page article titled SCIENCE FICTION -ITS PLACE IN LITERATURE with a two-pager titled STAR TREK - A PERSONAL VIEW. Isn't there something out of balance here? Can one really sew up SF and its place in literature in half the time/space one needs to get across a personal view of STAR TREK? Maybe the next issue is the one to watch for: THE LEINSTER LOUDMOUTH seems to have more potential than is revealed in this issue.

Book Reviews

ROOMS OF PARADISE edited by Lee Harding. Quartet, Melbourne: 1978.

OTHER WORLDS edited by Paul Collins. Void Publications, Melbourne: 1978.

In the Piazza San Giovanni in Florence stands what is now known as the Baptistery but which was until 1128 the cathedral in Florence. The Baptistery has three famous doors.

The first doors were produced by Andrea Pisano early in the 14th century. In 1401 a competition to select an artist to produce a second set of doors was won by Lorenzo Ghiberti, who completed them around 1424. But the doors by which Ghiberti is best known and remembered were the second set which he produced between 1425 and 1452. In his first set, intent on maintaining the standard of Pisano's door, he closely imitated what had already been done - and did it very well. But in the later doors, as Gombrich says, 'he was clearly out not only to reach the high standard of the past but to make progress, progress even beyond his earlier work.'

Perhaps he succeeded: it is said that when Michaelangelo first saw Ghiberti's second doors he exclaimed 'These doors are fit to stand at the Gates of Paradise', and since then the Gates of Paradise (or sometimes the Doors of Paradise) they have been.

These two anthologies are sad little collections - perhaps no worse than their contemporaries - an ever-present reminder of the intense lack of thought which goes into the production of science fiction.

Lee Harding and I were speaking at some time part way through my reading of ROOMS OF PARADISE and he asked me how I liked the book. 'Well' I said 'I haven't read all of the stories yet, Lee. But tell me, are there any human beings in any of them?' He hemmed and hawed a little, I thought, and then suggested that possibly the Gene Wolfe story did have human beings in it. But he added that he thought that perhaps the content of ROOMS OF PARADISE reflected the state of the field of science fiction.

And perhaps it does: if it does it isn't hard to predict an increased market for science fiction as it lowers itself towards pabulum television.

The stories in ROOMS OF PARADISE (and in OTHER WORLDS) certainly show no artistic 'progress' over earlier work: whether they reach the standards of the past is a matter of opinion. Certainly the better stories wouldn't have been out of place in the science fiction magazines of twenty or thirty years ago. Kevin McKay's PIE ROW JOE (in ROOMS OF PARADISE) is a new twist - but how sad that that is as much as I can squeeze out of these two anthologies! how regrettable that I can't report that someone, somewhere, at least tried to 'make progress'!

These books were published for several reasons. A leading one is that there does seem to be an increased market for science fiction in Australia nowadays (probably the result of substantial efforts by the editors of these two books). Mostly, however, it is my feeling that the books contain the stories they do because the authors don't care terribly - not about the important things. Getting into print may be important - what it is that is printed is insignificant. Getting paid is important - making do with thirty pieces of silver is okay.

These books are a tribute to the importance of quantity in science fiction and forcefully remind us of the inconsequence of quality. It isn't because the authors are chronically incapable of writing, but that rather in these stories the capable ones - the few capable ones - haven't really performed. For example, George Turner's BELOVED SON is a marvel of construction; his IN A PETRI DISH UPSTAIRS (In ROP) is a dreary bore we could all have done without. Shit, George, the Custodian!

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I would have thought you had passed that stage somewhere back in the forties!

The covers of both books are by Michael Payne, and it isn't too hard to say that they are the best features of the volumes.

The advance of Australian science fiction, which is what Paul Collins and Lee Harding assert is their concern, lies less with the publication of a couple of collections of second-rate stories in Australia than with the publication of a couple of classy stories anywhere. George Turner has indicated a direction with **BELOVED SON**: is it possible that no one can follow his lead?

John Foyster

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N O O Z

PERTH (Roy Ferguson) I publish a monthly newsletter for WA fans titled 'The WASFAN'. The next issue will be out in a week or two. To put you in the general picture regarding fandom in WA there are three main groups. The oldest (and the only one with any money) is WASFA which started in November 1976 following SWANCON 1. The second one is FOC (Federation Outpost Colony) which is the local STAR TREK group. This was started as an independent group but all its members subsequently joined WASFA so it is in effect a subgroup of WASFA although they continue to hold separate meetings. The most recently-formed in UNISFA formed during 1978 at the University of Western Australia. This is only a small group and they are still in the process of getting themselves properly worked in with the student guild at uni.

The major fan activity in WA right at the moment is the season of sf films being run by WASFA in conjunction with the Canning Public Libraries at the Perth Institute of Film and Television. This has been quite successful and is making some money for WASFA. Apart from Tony Peacey there has been little 'zine publishing in WA until a couple of months ago when Bevan Casey put out THE LEINSTER LOUDMOUTH. Ian Nicholls has also published a 'zine while I was in England but I have not seen a copy yet.

ADELAIDE (Chas Jensen) Robin Johnson appears to be enjoying the flying visit to Adelaide, despite having arrived on the hottest day so far this summer (or the ten previous summers). Dinner on Friday night was quite pleasant and I think I found out why Robin is such a great conversationalist - far more experience to draw on, and general experience counts for much. I had not realised that Gary Mason was a comics fan, and the time for me alternated between talking and resting. SASFA is currently planning to begin putting out its own newsletter in the New Year. Hey, this is the New Year. I guess that means the first issue can't be much more than a month away. It's strange, actually, because up until now the club has been very tenuous and informal in its running, and its main activity has consisted in the planning of the yearly con, or the odd adult education course. Entirely likely that it will be strictly a local product, at least until interstate fan try writing to it.

SYDNEY (Carey Handfield) About 20 people attended the January meeting of the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation: Mackay's leading fan (Leanne Frahm) attended, and the auction raised \$20.05 for GUFF.

(Eric Lindsay) Anarchy reigned, as usual, in the film discussion. Leanne Frahm arrived in Sydney at 5.15 pm the same evening and was kidnapped from the airport by Jack Herman, Peter Toluzzi and Keith Curtis, and dined with that mately lot at the Windsor Arms. Carey Handfield and your 'umble reporter arrived there

in time to make crude comments on the food. A car-packing contest was held, following which we all went to the SSFF evening. Leanne is in Sydney to attend the Science Fiction Writers Workshop.

MELBOURNE (Rob Gerrand) Norstrilia Press is very active at the moment. We have two interesting SF novels on our hands due for publication later this year. One of these, MOON IN THE GROUND by Keith Antill, won the Mary Gilmour prize. Needless to say we are very excited at gaining the rights to publish it. I am editing an all-Australian anthology (sf of course) to be jointly published by Norstrilia and Outback Press. Norstrilia has now embarked on the perilous seas of typesetting aboard the Bruce Gillespie-controlled barque of an IBM memory composer. Anyone wanting very precise typesetting at very competitive rates now knows who to contact.

(Paul Stevens) The Bringing an American to SYNCON '79 part of DUFF is struggling along against mighty winds and heavy seas: nominations are called from the appropriate individuals (see the notice in the previous Chunder!, but reverse the numbers of Americans and Australians) and move FAST!

(John Foyster) The death of the Nova Mob (or its suspension, if you are queasy) got me thinking about the need for a science fiction club in Melbourne at all. I think I have found a place where the Nova Mob might meet, but before doing any further investigation, I wonder if I can reasonably call on the Melbourne (or perhaps Victorian) readers of Chunder! to give their views on the kind of club which would interest them. If you are interested at all, could you drop me a line answering the following questions?

- A Are you interested in attending meetings of any sort of SF club at all?
- B If so, what characteristics would that club have?
- (i) in what sort of location would it meet?
 - (ii) what sort of facilities would the meeting place have?
 - (iii) what night(s) of the week would be most appropriate for it to meet?
 - (iv) how much would you be prepared to pay to attend a meeting?
 - (v) what sort of activities would occur at the meetings?

C If not, what sort of structure do you see as running conventions, recruiting new fans, and so on?

If I can assemble enough answers I can start negotiating.

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EDITORIAL

- (1) Please don't forget to send in your nominations for the CHUNDER! POLL by the end of the month, and get the ratings of convention items in at the same time, if you can manage it.
- (2) Note that there's very little of that nasty stuff about DUFF and the DITMARS in this issue: there could have been, gentle reader, ever so easily. However, no letter has been received from Blair Damage or Peter Toluzzi.
- (3) In the next Chunder! I'll publish some introductory material relating to an American plan to change the Worldcon Rules which vitally affects the future of Australian bids. It would be handy to have discussion on this in subsequent editions of Chunder!

GUFF BALLOT FORM

GUFF is a one-shot fan fund which has been created to send/bring a popular Australian fan to the British 1979 World SF Convention, SEACON. There are fan funds between America and Europe and between America and Australia (TAFF and DUFF) but by holding a special fund contest between Australia and Britain British fans will get to see what a dinkum Aussiefan looks like and Australian fandom will express a unique kind of support for SEACON.

GUFF will be a success through the efforts and support of fandom. The candidates will be voted for by fans all over the world and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than \$1.50 or £0.80. These votes and other donations and financial support will make GUFF a success.

WHO MAY VOTE: Anyone who has been active in fandom (fanzines, conventions, clubs etc.) prior to January 1977 and who contributes \$1.50 or £0.80 to the fund may vote. Contributions greater than the minimum are gratefully received. Only one vote per person is allowed, no proxy votes and you MUST sign your ballot. Details of the voting will be kept secret and write-ins are permitted. Money orders and cheques should be made payable to the administrators and not to GUFF.

DEADLINE: Votes must reach the administrators by the 30th April, 1979.

HOW THE VOTES ARE COUNTED: Votes are counted using the optional-preferential system which results in a majority win. You may rank the candidates in the order you wish to vote. If the leading first-place candidate does not get a majority of the votes cast the lowest ranking candidate is dropped and his second-place votes are redistributed to the remaining candidates. In a three person contest such as this one this process will guarantee that one of the remaining candidates wins by a clear majority. If you wish to give preferences in your vote it is therefore important to vote for second and third places on your ballot.

However voters have the option of voting only for their choice of candidates and not allotting preferences. If you wish to do this simply place a '1' beside your choice and ignore the others. When the votes are counted, if you have voted for the lowest placed candidate and there is no clear majority, your ballot will be discarded when preferences are redistributed.

DONATIONS: GUFF will need contributions or money and material (for auction) in order to be a success. If you are ineligible to vote or do not feel qualified to vote donations will be gratefully accepted anyway.

THE CANDIDATES: On the reverse side of this sheet are listed the names of the candidates, the names of the nominators and a short statement in support of their candidature. Each candidate has posted a bond and promised that, barring acts of ghod, he will travel to the 1979 World SF Convention at Brighton, Britain.

..... SEND COMPLETED BALLOTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

British Administrator

Dave Langford
22 Northumberland Avenue
Reading
Berkshire RG2 7PW
UNITED KINGDOM

Australian Administrator

Leigh Edmonds
PO Box 103
Brunswick
Victoria 3056
AUSTRALIA

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THE GUFF PLATFORMS

John Alderson

With your help this is going to be my first overseas convention. I am a faned and a fan-writer as well as an aspiring author with several published stories to my credit, and I have just finished a novel. Farmer by profession, interested in history, mythology and anthropology. Science fiction just comes naturally though living a long way from Melbourne has cut me off from much fan activity so I am better known by my writings. I am consequently a rural fan, a different, rare and very distinctive breed with a taste for wine and Yorkshire pudding.

Nominators: Pete Presford, Andrew Darlington, Marc Ortlieb, Lee Harding & Paul Stevens

John Foyster

Attended Australian SF conventions since 1958: chairman of 1966 and 1971 conventions. Published many fanzines since 1961 including THE WILD COLONIAL BOY, SATURA /THE GRYPHON, EXPLODING MADONNA/THE JOURNAL OF OMPHALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY. Coedited (with Edmonds) NORSTRILIAN NEWS and BOYS' OWN FANZINE. Guest edited AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and SF COMMENTARY. Member of SAPS (1962-1972), FAPA (1969-1972, 1976-), OMPA (1969), ANZAPA (on and off since 1968). Won Ditmar for best fanzine (1970) and best Australian SF (1973). Initiated DUFF (1972). Twice founded The Nova Mob. When backed into a corner about his SF criticism pleads guilty but insane. Dislikes motor cars.

Nominators: Christopher Priest, Peter Nicholls, John Bangsund, Carey Handfield & Robin Johnson

Eric Lindsay

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to certify that Eric B Lindsay is full of GUFF. May he therefore be exiled back to the Old Dart and fed on water and bread as his ancestors were on the reciprocal journey before him. May he, moreover, be held up to Scorn and Ridicule and let his name be an Abomination and an Awful Warning. Here, but for the enlightened law of Transportation, is what Englishmen might have descended to.

He is guilty of Publishing Fanzines, writing LoCs, attending conventions, forgetting things, putting on conventions, writing articles, talking to fans, forgetting things, reading science fiction, using SR 1, collecting books, forgetting things, attending parties, throwing parties, forgetting things and forgetting things.

Nominators: Terry Jeeves, Dave Rowe, Ken Ozanne, Keith Curtis & Neville Angove

I VOTE FOR

John Alderson

John Foyster

Eric Lindsay

Signature.....

Name (print).....

Address.....

.....

Enclosed is my contribution to GUFF of (\$1.50 or 80p minimum)

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, in order to make sure of qualifying for voting please give the name and address of a fan or fan group to whom you are known.

Name..... Address.....

1979 TAFF BALLOT

What is TAFF? The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans across the Atlantic. Since that time, TAFF has regularly brought overseas fans to the USA and sent American fans to European conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted for by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of no less than one dollar. These votes, and the continued interest of fans, are what makes TAFF possible.

Who may vote? Voting is open to anyone who was active in fandom (clubs, fanzines, conventions, etc) prior to July 1977, and who contributes at least a dollar (or equivalent) to the fund. Contributions in excess of the minimum will be gratefully accepted. Only one vote per person is allowed, no proxy votes, and you **MUST** sign your ballot. Details of voting will be kept secret, and write-ins are permitted. Money orders and cheques should be made payable to the administrators, not to TAFF.

Deadline: Votes must reach the administrators by April 14, 1979.

Voting Details: TAFF uses the Australian system which guarantees an automatic runoff and a majority win. You rank the candidates in the exact order you wish to vote. If the leading first-place candidate does not get a majority, the first place votes of the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped and the second place votes on those ballots are counted. This process goes on until one candidate has a majority. **IT IS THEREFORE IMPRTANT TO VOTE FOR SECOND, THIRD, ETC, PLACE ON YOUR BALLOT.** It is also a waste of time to put one name in more than one place.

Hold Over Funds: This choice, similar to "No Award" in Hugo balloting, gives the voter the chance to vote for no TAFF trip if the candidates do not appeal to him, or if he feels that TAFF should slow down its program of trips. "Hold Over Funds" may be voted for in any position you wish, just as if it were another candidate.

Donations: TAFF needs continuous donations of money, and material to be auctioned, in order to exist. If you are ineligible to vote, or do not feel qualified to vote, why not donate anyway?

Candidates: Each candidate has promised, barring acts of God, to travel to the 37th World Science Fiction Convention in England. They have posted bond and provided signed nominations and platforms which are reproduced on the other side of this sheet along with the ballot.

SEND BALLOTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

AMERICAN ADMINISTRATOR:	or	EUROPEAN ADMINISTRATOR
Roy Tackett		Peter Roberts
915 Green Valley Road NW		38 Oakland Drive
Albuquerque, N.M. 87107 USA		Dawlish, Devon, UK

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FRED HASKELL

Fred Haskell stumbled into fandom in 1962, and has been actively involved in convention, club, and publishing fandom pretty much ever since. He frequently brings his guitar to cons, and can be found entertaining people long into the night. He was one of the Floundering Fathers of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society (Minn-stf). He has been or still is in APA45, Minneapa, and AZAPA; has published a number of genzines; and was editor of the Minn-stf clubzine, RUNE, for two years. He was nominated for a FAAN award from RUNE 48. Well-rounded indeed!

Nominated by: Denny Lien, Suzle Tompkins, Dave Piper,
Bob Vardeman and Malcolm Edwards

TERRY HUGHES

Still (since 1971) publishes MOTA after 25+ issues and several hundred typos. Co-edited (with Chris Couch) the bi-weekly HIGH TIMES (1972). Member APA-45 (1972), OMPA (1977), FAPA (1975-on). Frequent letterhack and contributor to various fanzines. Attended first convention in 1969 (ST. LOUISCON) and has gone to several each year since, including 1978 AUTOCLAVE (as Guest of Honour). Serves as Assistant Editor for AMAZING, FANTASTIC, and SCIENCE FICTION FIVE-YEARLY. Possesses a nose of legendary proportions and has a matching set of ears. Life-long ambitions include winning the Olympic gold medal for javelin catching and being selected TAFF delegate to SEACON.

Nominated by: Harry Bell, Pat Charnock, Lee Hoffman,
Hank Luttrell and Tom Perry

SUZANNE TOMPKINS

Way back in the late 1960's, Suzanne Tompkins co-founded the Western Pennsylvania Science Fiction Association, co-edited GRANFALLOON, and co-started Pghlange, Pittsburgh's own regional convention. In the early 1970's, she moved to New York City where she co-inhabited the Avocado Pit and co-edited a Hugo-nominated fanzine, THE SPANISH INQUISITION. Today, Suzle lives in Seattle and is running for TAFF on her own.

Nominated by: Linda Bushyager, Fred Haskell, Terry Jeeves,
Rosemary Pardoe and Susan Wood

DO NOT DETACH THIS SECTION

I vote for (list 1, 2, 3, 4)

<input type="checkbox"/> Fred Haskell	Signature _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Terry Hughes	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Suzanne Tompkins	(Please print legibly)
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold Over Funds	Address _____

Enclosed is _____ as a contribution to TAFF

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, in order to qualify for voting, please give the name and address of a fan or fan group to whom you are know:

Name _____
Address _____

PLEASE SEND COMPLETE FORM BACK