

THE MENTOR

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This is the October, 1980, issue of THE MENTOR. It is edited by Ron L Clarke of 6 Bellevue Rd., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Postal address for letters is : PO BOX C377, Clarence Street, Sydney 2000, Australia. Fanzines to the house address, please. THE MENTOR is available for Trade, Substantial Letter of Comment, Articles, Stories and Artwork (the last three of which are in drastically short supply). THE MENTOR is NOT available for subscription, though single copies are available for \$1 each. Total number printed this ish are about 130 - of which about 123 will be going out.

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This page is being typed on the second week of my ~~holiday~~ sick leave. It started out as holidays, but the heavy cold I had at work degenerated to something like bronchitis, the last of which is still sticking (cough! cough!). The date is 28/8/80. The issue will not be finished being stencilled until I check the postal box at Clarence St. sometime next week for more mail.

A U S T R A L I A I N ' 8 3 !

This has been an R & S publication.

RON'S ROOST

This is beginning to get ridiculous - here I was going for a quarterly schedule, and now here I am with an issue nearly complete and its only the next month. Actually it isn't so bad - I've run out of articles, stories and whatnots. So the next issue is in the far future. Except for the Molesworth piece, of course. But I'm sure no-one wants an entire issue filled with past events, not even Graham.

So, what I'm asking for are for some of the above from you readers out there. I can't keep standing over the wife and beating her to get stories out of her like the one on page three of this issue! She wants to sell them elsewhere. Sooner or later she will stand up and sit on me.

The fanzines are still coming in. Since the last issue received are: a relative of THE SACRED COW - Allan F J Bray; THE WEST OF MINSTER'S LIBRARY 5 - Marc Ortlieb; POSITRON 4 - Gary Rawlings; RHUBARB 8 - John Fox; PHOSPHENE 8 - Gil Geier; and FORERUNNER V3 no 2/3 - Jack Herman.

Actually, I also have been doing a lot of reading (for me) and the sf list reads: Bulmer's New Writings in SF 24; Sprague de Camp's The Queen of Zamba; Leiber's Ships To The Stars; Bulmer's New Writings in SF 27; Delany's City Of A Thousand Suns; Goulart's Shaggy Planet; Dick's The World Jones Made; Dye's The Prisoner In The Skull; Elwood's Beware More Beasts; Moorcock's Book of Martyrs; and lastly an Australian novel by John Bailey: The Moon Baby.

Whilst down the south coast getting over my bronchitis, I picked up some prozines for 50¢ each - SF ADVENTURES Vol 1 no 6 and Vol 2 no 11. I also picked up the Bre editions of FANTASTIC Vol 1 no 8; FUTURE No 9; ASTOUNDING for December, 1953; AMAZING for October 1959 and SCIENCE FANTASY Vol 2 no 6, Vol 6 no 17, Vol 13 no 38 and vol 17 no 50. Most of the stories in these issues are at least up to the quality of the best anthologies published now.

I was at the Premier in Sydney of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK some weeks ago and all I can say is three years between episodes will take a lot of patience. The 'sequel' to STAR WARS was at least its equal - in some points its superior. Take the model work. The Tanks and the hopper were superior to any long action shots in the earlier STAR WARS, but it seemed to me that the TIE fighters shown chasing the FALCON through the asteroids were less real with their blueish image than the fighters in the first (er, fourth) episode.

The TV shows seem to have taken a plunge, with BLAKE'S SEVEN off, and only BATTLESTAR showing the flag, though last Monday night they had it off, with SLOANE taking its place, but only for that night, they said. Ha.

Oh well, looks like that for this ish. Sue wants to start typing out the next issue of DATA, Evelyn is off next door with her girlfriend (probably playing 'mothers and fathers'), and Tim is playing with his Boot House - just the time to run this thing off.

- Ron.

CONTACT.

BY SUSAN CLARKE.

Over the city structure, there was only a yellowish haze which made visibility the best it had been all summer. It was hot, of course. That was how one knew that it was summer - hot and sticky, and for those who were foolish enough to spend much time out of doors, it was quite deadly. Unless the person was Conditioned.

The view was rather magnificent today, even with it's ever-present blurring of edges about the tall monolithic buildings that stretched out at what seemed to be regular intervals about each other - disappearing into the haze. The young always made the mistake of believing that this was the totally of the world, even though they had been taught that their world was round, and continued on and on until it reached them again. How utterly incredible! Someday it would be proved to be flat and quite small (as they knew by virtue of their own eyes).

Once, long ago, this kind of view would have been much sought after by the city dwellers. But those people had long gone and now the city dwellers dreaded the journey up and out of doors. The brown and yellow-hued, silent, unearthly, utterly quiet air outside, only moving in swirls when a windstorm swept about the non-moving structures.

Big, base structures. Strong and silent like their world.

Below, the brightly-lit domes of the growing acres could be seen, and the transit and trade tunnels with their silver trains snaking between the city structures. All were covered to protect the frail flesh and blood creatures that made their home on this planet.

Except for the Conditioned. For them, the yellow grasses and spindly trees that capped the acres above each of the structures was a wonderful playground. So alive and living. And they only felt pity for the ones who could not share their joy at the sight of the almost transparent leaves with their skeletal forms, hanging whispily from the ancient branches. Tougher, newer plants were growing, too. Hardy cacti and spindle plants that didn't disintergrate at a touch, but grew resilient against all. On some of the city structures, it was rumoured that these plants had taken over and had resisted all attempts to train and cililize for the pleasure of the Conditioned ones.

Tara stood alone amongst the jungle of life on top of the city structure. Breathing this strange-hued air came naturally to her, unlike those below. She could also breathe their colourless, tasteless air, but it held no flavour or excitement to her. Here, she could feel and taste the storm and

know whether it came with the mists or from the seashore.

She longed to know what the seashore was really like. She knew the things they had shown her in the schoolroom once, but that was a long time ago, before she knew she was one of the Conditioned and before her trainign segregated her from those of her age-group.

She pitied their sterile lives inside. Never to know the glory of the heat of the sun-heated air, or the tang of the chilled night air. She and the others of her kind pitied them. It was symptomatic of their differences in thought - it was needed for their contentment with their allotted roles in the city's functions. For each member of the city had their role to fulfil in life and would never consider to challenge the decisions of the city's controllers.

At least not aloud.

A thin, whining hum seemed to echo in her ear. It was an irritating sound and her hand moved automatically upwards as it to block it off, but it was only a slight movement for there was no real way of muffling the calling signal from the communications implant behind her ear.

She murmured, remembering. It was a privilege to be Conditioned. One was born to be different.

With a muttered sign, she moved towards the garden's entrance and the airlock there. The city's pure air must be protected at all costs, though the delay this caused was inevitable. 'Just as well', she thought wryly, 'they can't hear my thoughts like I hear their signal. They would not be at all amused.'

Tara walked briskly through the corridor, her thoughts her only company. People sharing the corridor moved across from her path with an almost shunning gesture. She was Conditioned and therefore almost an alien in their midst.

"C. Tara 436", the faceless, mechanical-sounding voice of her C.P. Controller had echoed her name in affirmation. It was always possible that even he was not one of them. The orders were always crisp and concise and did not allow for questions. The Conditioned Ones always obeyed. The Conditioned must never questions - aloud.

The corridors she now entered were less populated by the city's personnel, and more frequently she exchanged greetings with the others of her kind, until there were only Conditioned Ones - all engrossed in their own tasks. None of the others would walk this far from the centre of their work and comforts; for the air began to become tainted here - it was not as clear and pristine in the periphery corridors, where leaks still occurred from seals around doors leading to the outside that were never meant to be permanently closed. Slowly the city was retreating in on itself. The population was scaled down accordingly. When some of the older, lower Conditioned spoke, if their ramblings were to be believed, for they were strange, almost gregarious creatures. In their generation the city had almost half again more population than it had now, they said. Half again would be many thousands of people, and at that thought Tara shivered. Still, it was probably an exaggeration. They were garrulous, spare men and women whose sear skins were stained yellow, and whose heads were wrinkled and dried.

Corridor 106W. Glancing up, Tara confirmed her position. She tapped the communications square on her belt that acknowledged her position and compliance with orders. At the end of the corridor was the airlock to the outside

on the ground level. It was very rarely used, for the dust and airborne grit was slowly building up around the building. Very soon it would be impossible to use at all.

The controls seemed to be in order, but they were only jury-rigged. This was the city's second major airlock and was fitted about the building's previous superstructure. The more modern airlocks were built as a unit, then fitted into the building at points convenient to the Conditioned for their work. The Conditioned were expert now at sealing these units into the city structure. They should be, it was their purpose in life - to keep the people within safe and uncontaminated in their sterile womb.

The controls seemed in order, but in fact when Tara moved a practised hand over them, they did not respond immediately, and it was only after some time that the outer door, one of the original fittings of the city, began to move apart, slowly and unevenly. At first a small trickle of the dust fell between the opening doors, then a deluge spilled in, black and clinging carrying odours from outside. Tara wrinkled her nose in distaste as it clung to her new uniform, but the smell was refreshing and different. It had flavour and body, and all at once she was anxious to mount the pile of tumbling refuse and dust and climb out into the real air. The thick yellow and brown cloud, indicating the beginnings of a windstorm, enveloped her as she stepped up and out, resealing the door behind her as she went.

It was tempting to stride out and explore, but it was not allowed. A Conditioned One never left the prescribed city limits in the course of his or her duty. Their recreation was taken in the city-top gardens or in their own areas. They just didn't just go out of the city and walk. Their first duty was to the city and its inhabitants.

Her hand again touched the communications square to acknowledge her position. It was a regular routine - one that didn't require any thought at all. Already her eyes were searching out for the reported rapid leak and disturbance on the west wall.

Vague shadows moved in the swirling air. She could smell a cover of salt in the air and it was tantalising, but resolutely she turned her back on it and started her slow methodical search of the exterior. The walls loomed up and seemed to be lost in the haze above. From the base of the building it seemed there could be no other thing so immense, or overpowering as the city block. It overshadowed them all. Tara was rarely out on this level. The first floor of the building had been mainly abandoned except for the central sections. The Conditioned used some of the recreation areas there, but most of the rooms were unsuitable.

Her eyes searched out for a possible leak. They were sharp eyes that withstood the burning powers of the air outside. Even the Mezzo Conditioned were a form of goggles to protect their eye's sensitive surface when they worked in the city's air locks.

When about a quarter of the distance across the west wall, she found what could have been the old main west entrance for the building. Great sheets of the metallic alloy they had used for the sealing rivetted to the superstructure, were covered with signs of the corrosive air and the sticky black dust had covered it in a thick greasy film. About the middle section of the sheets there seemed to be some evidence of high heat burning. - a white searing of the flat black surface. This was definitely where the leak was coming from. Tara wondered what had cut the metal, exposing the building's interior through two sheets of the alloy which sandwiched a thick sheet of ~~corrosive~~-resistant plastic.

Curious, Tara bent to the fine-lined cracks in the alloy's surface, but only shadows and surfaces of grey could be seen inside. It was too dark.

Suddenly a strange noise alerted her to the presence of another. It was quite clearly footsteps muffled by the surface dust and the wind, and it was coming closer. She froze for a moment, fear and curiosity welling up. This was not covered by her training. She had been told of no other Conditioned One to be sent with her, and the C.P.C. never made an error. Everyone knew their world's surface was barren, so what....who was it?

Slowly she turned and remained still. From out of the moving air, a dark shape loomed - roughly human shaped, but different. Not moving, she waited.

Two blue eyes searched her large deep brown ones. They echoed the amazement and incredibility shown there. They moved closer, more slowly now, and the bulky outline became more clear. It was a city dweller an Un-Conditioned One! The skin was vaguely pink and frail looking, and the body was completely encompassed in a gray garment, that could have been coloured once, before being exposed to the outside, for it looked male, though small in stature.

The man looked equally startled at the sight of the generously-built, golden skinned amazon before him - her skin naked to the effects of the air and seemingly oblivious to the effects it should have upon it.

He looked down at some sort of meter or dial and a flash of impatience seemed to pass quickly over his face. He stood for a moment, considering, then moved. With a beckoning gesture, he indicated that she should follow him, but she did not respond, moving further back, to lay her hands flat against the building. Should she touch her emergency call square? She had never used it before, but never before had a non-Conditioned one asked her to follow him out into the barren lands. She was Conditioned and therefore not under the jurisdiction of just any city dweller, and she was High Conditioned, which gave her a rating above most of those who were Conditioned. She did not have to follow him, yet she wanted to. To See.

He came closer and she pressed her backbone against the wall. One never came so near them. They did not voluntarily come closer. Even as children they stayed apart at their lessons. They were different. That was the way it was.

The man seemed puzzled by something. His movements seemed tentative. The woman was making no defensive movements - nor any aggressive ones. She didn't seem to be tensing up for escape - she was just moving away with a definite look of fear and puzzlement in her eyes. He reached out his hand and touched her and felt her shrink further into herself - a look of horror and stunned disbelief on her face.

Even amongst themselves, Conditioned Ones were remote, insular people.

His hand moved back quickly as if amazed by her reaction. He hadn't terrified anyone in years - and never like this.

A small buzzing noise seemed to issue from his wrist and they both looked at it. He tapped his wrist with annoyance, and then taking the initiative, he grasped her wrist and whilst she was too shocked to register what was happening, he pulled her into the swirling mists so that the city's outline was soon lost to her and she was hopelessly lost.

A large bulk loomed before her. It was not a building. She knew that automatically. It did not belong to the city or the neighbouring towers....

it was not connected to them by a long tunnel. Perhaps it was a tunnel vehicle that had come out of the tunnel - but how? Where was the Conditioned One to repair this obvious fault? Surely the C.P.C. of their city or growing acres would have known about it. It would be a disaster for them as the crops from the growing acres would die and wither like those on top of the buildings, and the atmosphere would become contaminated in the city. Her hand went automatically to the emergency signal on her belt, but the man stopped her, by clasping her other wrist as well. His manner seemed to indicate urgency and he wanted her to hurry; to enter his strange vehicle, if that was that it was. Perhaps it was an emergency and they needed her aid. It was wrong for her to leave her city and it must always be first in her loyalties, but who could tell the workings of the mind of them? They depended on the Conditioned Ones. To be Conditioned was to be privileged, and to be privileged was to be responsible. He probably needed her. If only he would not touch her.

It was unheard of. Perhaps his city's customs were different, but it revolted her. Living in the city was close, so keeping to oneself was a virtue. One's private person was untouchable except by invitation.

A door opened before them and the man pushed Tara in, then followed her and sealed the door. It was an airlock: small, so that it necessitated contact of their bodies. Tara tried not to flinch, but her expression of distaste was obvious. The man pulled the cover from his head, as the air paled, and grinned at her. No Un-Conditioned personnel had ever smiled at her before and she was astounded at his effrontery. Had he no concept of the social mores they all followed?

"That's one hell of a fog out there. Damn close call," he said in a friendly voice, obviously trying to put her at her ease. Her eyes widened even further in surprise. He had addressed her directly. Only her first tutors who had dealt with mixed classes out of the city's nurseries had ever done that. It had been many years since she had been addressed by one of them.

She tried to smile politely back, but her lips were stiff. "It is always dense at the levels near the base." His voice had a strangely coarse, flat sound that seemed out of line with her looks, but at least she had spoken to him. He seemed relieved, and as the inner lock door opened, he indicated that she should enter. She stood stiffly in the centre of the tiny room - it seemed tiny because the walls seemed to be covered with instruments and lockers and strange, unfamiliar objects.

The man walked to one of the lockers and peeled off the outer garments that he wore. He looked ever smaller out of them. Over his shoulder he made a remark, "Always though Kembala was the worst place around for grit and dust, but this is incredible. Thank god for homing signals."

Her mind noted the new terms he was using, but did not comprehend them.

"There is an emergency?" she asked in her strangely stilted speech.

His eyes looked enquiry. "No, just routine," he answered her.

What could be routine to him - out of the city's limits, in a small structure, wearing garments to cover him completely and walking out like a Conditioned One, talking to her like they were the same kind, touching her? She remained silent.

The man looked her up and down in the clear air of his room. Her features were more coarse than he had first thought. Her hands, resting by her side

were wide and her skin, although it seemed to gleam golden under the artificial lights of the cabin, seemed thick. And she was dirty. A thought occurred to him that perhaps man was adapting, but he dismissed it, remembering that the time had been relatively brief since the cities had sealed themselves to the outside atmosphere - only about ten generations... Then she spoke, for the first time taking the initiative. "Where do you belong?"

He looked his query, so she continued, "I am from Sidsub East."

He looked at her, then repeated it slowly. "Sid-sub-East." Then he recognised what she had said. "Of course," he smiled. "The maps were accurate after all. It's hard to track these places down with no decent thoroughfares, you know." But her look was enquiring and confused. "Well, maybe you wouldn't know," he conceded. He crossed to where she stood, looking up at her. "I'm from Canberra. Name of Dan Stanward," and offered her his hand.

He was inviting contact. It was a sign of his friendship being offered, she was sure, but she did not want to voluntarily touch an un-Conditioned person. They were so different - with their scarce hair, pink skins and anaemic appetites for the bland and tasteless things.

She stood hesitant. He seemed to guess a little of her reaction and it discouraged him a little. "Your name?" he prompted.

"C. Tara 436."

"What does the 'C' stand for?" he asked, taking out a flat board, which he then seemed to tap randomly.

She looked surprised again. "Conditioned," she said tersely.

He put down the board and crossed to one of the control panels and manipulated some of the controls. Turning back to her, he asked clearly, "Could you repeat your full name and explain the prefix 'C'."

"Why?"

"I want to record it for the sociology boys, C. Tara 436. What does the Conditioned mean?"

She was suspicious now. "Have you no Conditioned ones?"

He shook his head in reply. "No."

"Who repairs your city? Who goes to the outside to maintain the seals?"

He was plainly interested now, but tried not to betray it too much. She seemed frightened in some way, of their differences. He answered her levelly. "We have a Department of Maintenance. Men and women like myself don protective clothing and are trained to work outside, to build, and if necessary, repair. Not too many repairs though. Canberra was well built, and is still quite airtight. At present we're expanding underground, through the Woden Valley. It was heavy going at first because of the water table, but the boys from Planning and Environment found a damned good solution."

He was rousing her curiosity, he was sure. She was listening carefully, not understanding fully, but trying to digest. Obviously things were done very differently here. Just how differently he could not tell, but he found himself again wondering if they were all like Tara in these city towers.

"Are there many Conditioned ones?" he probed, now lounging against the control, pretending a casualness he didn't feel.

"I am Tara 436. There were 435 Conditioned ones before me, although only a few are High Conditioned," she explained, starting to become restless. "Why did you bring me here?"

"I wanted to talk to you," he answered. "It's part of my job to talk to people."

Suspicious, she looked closer at him, trying to read his expression. "Even Conditioned ones?"

"Especially Conditioned ones," he returned.

"But if you didn't know of our existence, how could you know you wanted to talk to us?" he asked, confused. She began to feel desperate to leave, but one glance at the airlock controls convinced her that she would have to depend on his letting her go.

His glance followed hers and he could guess the train of her thoughts. "Do you realise that in the years that people have lived in their city towers, sealed off from others except through long distant communications devices that do not work so well through the soup we call our atmosphere, each group has found a different way of coping with the problems of repairing their towers. Down at the Gong, they have fashioned remote control systems. At Lucas they have advanced in robotics. By and large though, numbers in the towers are decreasing and people are retreating further and further into their towers. Canberra seems an exception, but we were well placed, and prepared. We even keep livestock, and it's an improvement on the tanked yeast stuff that some of the towers seemed to have been reduced to. You know, I can hardly wait to get my teeth into a piece of real meat after all this canned synthetic stuff."

He could see that she was caught by her imagination now. The ideas were confusing her, but she was curious to find out more. "Where is Gong, Lucas and Canberra?" she asked rapidly. "What is meat?"

He grinned now. "Have you no livestock - animals?" and as she shook her head he continued. "No-one has ever shown you pictures of animals?" Again she shook her head. "Don't worry," he said lightly, trying to dismiss it now from her mind. It would not do to make her restless after he left, with no way of finding out answers to her questions. "The city Elders, or Council, or whatever, probably thought it best not to fill you with useless information. It would only be trivial knowledge if you have no animals. Not important at all." Mentally he added that censorship had been common to most of the places he had visited. Perhaps too much knowledge was considered dangerous to the ordered living in the towers. But it frightened him, a man of knowledge and of fact, that things could be hidden for a generation or so, then eventually would be lost permanently to whole populations. What did these people think of outsiders; of their world?

There was silence again between them. Tara seemed to have accepted what he had said. But then, if 'Conditioned' meant in mind as well as in body, she might not know exactly how to question a statement of fact.

The familiar him of her calling signal seemed insistent now, as it suddenly turned her mind from the unfamiliar things. She must get to a communications console. She must reply. It was her duty. They would now have assumed that something had happened to her. If she did not answer, then a new Conditioned one would come out to repair the leak and she would be counted as dead. Not a loss, but a time wasted. A Conditioned one was only important whilst they were performing their duty to the city, and she had failed her

duty and therefore was no longer important. She had to return before it was too late.

She moved to the door and stood in front of it. "I must go," she pleaded.

The man quickly strode over to her, impatient and frustrated. "But you can't go now. We must talk. I want to learn about the Conditioned ones; about your city and it's fellows."

"Sidsub West, Sidsub North, Sidsub South, Sidsub Cen," she said impatiently in her flat voice. "I must go.... now!"

"But do you keep in contact? How can I speak to your Council?" His hands moved to her shoulders. "Stay a while longer," he urged.

"Let me go now," she said a little quicker than before, indicating her agitation. "They are calling me. If I don't go now, I will be reported dead."

The man looked aghast, then moved quickly. He released her shoulders and pressed into her unwilling hands two objects. Quickly he explained, "This round device is a direction finder. It will guide you to the point where we met. This square is a tape... it must go to your Council. It is important." Then he released the air lock control.

As he watched her go, Stanward cursed the fact that he could not go with her through the airlock that he knew must exist. His suit was not yet cleaned and he had not refilled his air tanks. He wanted to go, but could not. Still, the tape was a standard greeting. It would prepare the way for him. On that optimistic thought, he moved over to start processing the information he had obtained so far.

Tara looked out at the fading outlines of the buildings, out in the stormy clouds. Visibility was fast disappearing. Soon there would be nothing but the swirling, dancing colours about her. The air was thick and pleasant. She had completed her task, although she could imagine that the man would again attack the city's surface. Perhaps she wough to have told him where the airlock was that she had passed through to return to the city, but she was still uncertain of him. He had entertained her and roused her curiosity to such an extent that she had to make a conscious effort now to obliterate these disturbing thoughts whilst she worked at her tasks. These were rewarding though. It felt good to do one's duty. She was glad to have returned.

A smile, stiff and unnatural, curved her thick lips. How strange that he should think that she could contact the city's Controllers. He did not know very much about the way things were. Conditioned ones did not ask questions. Conditioned ones did not tell Controllers what they should do. She looked down with mild interest at the tape in her hand. On it's covering was an inscription and she examined it more closely. "Department of Census and Statistics" it read.

She turned, puzzled, towards the garden's entrance. Perhaps she would speak tonight to one of the Low Conditioned ones. One of the Elders. They might know more than she.

She, who was only a Conditioned one, and the possible hope of human kind on the planet Earth.

BALROG

: A MOURNFUL TALE

There was a Gnome in a dungeon;
All day he'd sit and moan,
"Why wasn't I born a Balrog,
Instead of a puny Gnome?
Everyone calls me 'Shorty',
And everyone laughs at me;
If I was a mighty Balrog,
Lord, how polite they'd be!"

"It's hard to be brave when you're little,
And get under people's feet.
There's hungry monsters in this dump.
(Thank God I'm too tough to eat!)
It's hard to be bright and cheery,
When everyone puts you down;
I wish I'd been born a Balrog,
Instead of a Gnomish clown.
Whenever they sing 'Short People',
I want to break down and cry —
I'll join an expedition,
And get rich quick — or die!"

Through many a deadly dungeon,
Year upon dreary year,
The Gnome amassed much treasure,
But it did not improve his cheer.
He'd sit on a heap of gold pieces
And mourn his dreary case;
For people still called him 'Shorty' —
Though never to his face.

One day while the Gnome was wandering,
A pack of Orcs jumped out;
The Gnome whipped out his hammer,
And bashed one on the snout.
The Orc's mates did not like this,
And with a nasty grin,
One grabbed the Gnome by the scruff of his neck,
And messily did him in.

The Gnome's mates wiped the Orcs out
And carried the Gnome away,
To the Temple of Reincarnation,
Where the Wizard wise did pray:
"O Mighty Ghod,
Give this good Gnome
A Brand New Body
For his soul's home!"

Then came a flash of lightning,
And then a thunderous roar!
The dead Gnome vanished, the Temple shook,
And a Balrog walked in the door!
Everyone in the Temple
Let out a frightened yell;
The Balrog said in a squeaky voice,
in Gnomish, "What the Hell?
I've been re-born as a Balrog!
Oh what a Glorious Day!"
And he started turning cartwheels,
While yodelling "Yippee-I-Ay!"

The Gnome is still a Balrog,
And sits on a golden throne;
In a grim dark tower in discontent —
And at times you can hear him groan:

"Why wasn't I born a Vala,
Instead of a Balrog vile?
The Demigods call me 'Hotstuff',
With a patronising smile.
If I was a mighty Vala,
Instead of a Balrog base,
Sauron would treat me with respect,
Or I'd wreck his bloody face.
It's hard to be proud and awesome
When everyone puts you down.
Why wasn't I born a Vala,
Instead of a Balrog clown?"

the end

— Diane Southgate.

ESCAPE

by David R. Marriott.

"Deacon Smiggins, you have been tried by your peers and found guilty of the most heinous crime of premeditated murder and numerous other acts of wanton violence." The judge's wrinkled face showed no trace of emotion as he continued. "Has the prisoner anything to say before I pronounce sentence?"

"Yeah, I got something to say alright." An evil sneer lit up the mean and brutal face of Deacon Smiggins as he spat out his answer. "Yous and yer screws 'avent built the gaol that Deacon Smiggins can't get out of. So pass yer blasted bleeding sentence and to hell with yer."

"Deacon Reginald Augustus Smiggins, I hereby pronounce upon you the maximum penalty that the law will allow." The eyes of the wisened old judge glared malevolently from beneath the wig and black cap as gravely his voice went on. "You are forthwith to be taken to a place of maximum detention where you will remain in total isolation for the term of your natural life."

The gavel thudded down.

The prisoner was then escorted down long grey corridors to a small grey courtyard. In this gloomy square of high grey walls stood a shiny black van, its rear doors gaping ominously open. Wordlessly the officers in blue, who were his escort, pushed him over to the van and uncerimonously shoved him into its dark interior. The doors slammed shut behind him, throwing the cabin into total darkness. As Smiggins sat on the floor rubbing his bruised elbow he slowly became aware of a hissing sound and an odd smell. It was his last thought as his mind also plunged into darkness.

With a groan Smiggins woke to a strange white room and a splitting headache. With glazed eyes he looked around and found that he was lying on a recessed bunk in a small metal walled room about two metres square. The anti-septic white walls, which reminded him of the hospital the police had finally cornered him in, were made up of various sized compartments, or rather the outlines of compartments, for at the moment they were all closed with the exception of the bunk compartment, which he now occupied in a sitting position,

The motion of sitting upright made Smiggin's mind swim. With an effort he stood up and looked around the room trying to find something to ease his aching head. In the ceiling one metre above his head there was what appeared to be a speaker grill.

"Guard!" he called in a hoarse voice, staring expectantly at the grill. "Guard! How about a headache pill then?"

A small panel slid silently open in front of him. Within he found a pill. He grabbed it eagerly and ran his eyes around the walls. "Where's

the water then?" He demanded.

In response another cubicle opened revealing a wash basin.

"And a glass, you stupid half-wit," growled Deacon.

No response. Smiggins looked every wall up and down, but no opening appeared.

"Please," he pleaded through gritted teeth, "please give me a drinking glass."

A panel slid smartly aside. A plasti-glass mug within.

Smiggins refrained from saying "thank you" aloud, but did however, mutter something under his breath as he lifted the tablets to his mouth.

Food came in packages three times a day. Entertainment was a half-metre square TV set that showed two-hundred year old James Cagney films and played chess and space-war games with him. Shower recess, garbage chute and toilet were also among his furnishings. No shaver ever appeared he noticed, but then he had no need of one ever again. They had taken care of that. No laundry was ever taken away to be washed either, for the same reason. Not that he needed hair or clothes, after all, the temperature never varied a degree.

"Barbarians, filthy pigs." He had thought when he found his long precious mane of hair gone (or words to that effect).

The lights dimmed for eight hours in twenty-four, though he had no way of knowing that for certain as time and date were denied him. Denied him also was any news from the outside world. He had ceased to be a part of the human race. But of course that was the idea was it not? Perhaps so, but Deason Smiggins had very different ideas. Smasher Smiggins did not stay in any place he hated. And he hated this cell with a vengeance.

His estimate of the time he had now spent in the cell was ten days. The time had come. They would not be expecting a break so soon. He had friends who would be waiting somewhere closeby. Now all he had to do was break out of this tin can.

He now knew which panel was the entrance. The large oblong panel to the left of the bunk had no function. All the other panels had. Therefore it was the doorway and behind it: freedom.

Putting his hand into his mouth Smiggins extracted four of his molars. Blood ran from his mouth. The tops of the teeth may have been plastic explosives, but the bottom halves still had the roots in. Not that Smiggins gave the blood and pain a second thought as he placed one tooth in each corner of the door panel, held there by chewing-gum so kindly provided by the cell. The last tooth he pulled had a timing device within. In one minute it would explode and ignite the other three. The panel would be blown apart. He would jump from the protection of the shower recess, overpower any guards and run to the friends he had arranged to be waiting. Thus he would make his escape. The authorities were fools to think that he could be contained by mere metal walls. This would be his greatest escape.

The timing device detonated the explosives:

Shards of mangled metal flew past the shower recess:

A roaring noise sounded in Smiggin's ears as he leapt from his shelter. He was halfway through the door before he realised he had made a terrible mistake. An irrevocable mistake, but he had little time to ponder that as he slowly floated away from the orbiting space capsule that had been his cell and took his place among the stars.

y,

In 1952 the scene in Australian fandom becomes more complex, due to a general upsurge in activities. The influx of new fans was creating a problem for the group meeting each Thursday night in a Sydney coffee inn. The science fiction fans moved away from the Sun Si Gai, and after trying Repin's in King Street, were now meeting at the Moccador in Market Street. A small group of fantasy fans and book collectors continued to meet at the Sun Si Gai. The newcomers joined the science-fiction faction and soon became too numerous to meet comfortably in a coffee inn. On January 31, there was a record attendance at the Moccador of twenty-one fans, including five of the female sex. It was obvious that the plan of meeting under such conditions would not work much longer. "Sooner or later," observed Stone in Stopgap,³⁵ "we'll have to hire a room in the city." Fans were asked to keep their eyes open for suitable premises in the city where gatherings could be held, and auctions conducted, without members of the general public looking on and coffee shop proprietors grinding their teeth in the background.

In January, Nick Solntseff published the third issue of Woomera, in its usual 20 pp. printed format, and announced that this would be the last for some time as he would be handicapped by University honours work. Since both Vol Molesworth and Royce Williams would also be occupied with study, it was decided to close down Futurian Press after the publication of Molesworth's Let There Be Monsters! in April.

At the 167th meeting of the Futurian Society, held on January 23, the Secretary announced that he had written to the Atlas Publishing Co., London, publishers of the British reprint edition of Astounding, and had asked if advertising space could be obtained to announce the first Ausgralian Convention. The company had replied, suggesting that circulars might be inserted in the magazines when the next issue reached Sydney. Haddon said he had contacted Gordon & Gotch Pty Ltd., the local distributors of Astounding, who were willing to insert such circulars free of charge. The number required for N.S.W. would be 1200. Haddon then astounded the meeting by producing a large parcel containing 1200 circulars, which he had printed himself. In due course the December, 1951, British reprint Astounding appeared in NSW bookstalls with the circulars inside them. Some 40-odd replies came back, among them letters from fans who were to become prominent in the coming months.

Attending this meeting was K. Stirling Macoboy, who was to leave Australia shortly on a visit to U.S.A., to study television. To enable Macoboy to meet American fans as an official representative of Australian fandom, the meeting decided to elect him an honorary member of the Society. Before Macoboy actually sailed, the Society sponsored a farewell dinner to him. Held at the Allora Cafe in Pitt Street on February 7, it was attended by fourteen Sydney fans. "It was fitting that this dinner should have been one of the most pleasant social evenings ever held by Sydney fans."³⁶

Since Macoboy was one of the seven trustees of Australian Fantasy Foundation, it was necessary to appoint someone to act as a proxy during his

absence overseas. The fan chosen was Ian Driscoll, who had already shown a great deal of interest in the library, toiling at the weekend to catalogue it and erect shelves to house it. Accordingly, a Foundation meeting was held on January 24, and Driscoll was appointed both proxy for Macoboy and Librarian of the Foundation. The Library in Mr. Driscoll's hands underwent a remarkable transformation, - it grew from a mere shell with only seven borrowers to a flourishing concern with 47 borrowers, and increased in volume from 85 books and 200 magazines in July, 1951, to 130 books and 360 magazines a year later.

Elections fell due at the January meeting of the Futurian Society, and members indicated their satisfaction with the progress the club was making by re-electing the previous executive panel in toto. Director Molesworth then appointed Harry Brunen public relations officer.

At the 168th meeting (February 25) Vice-Director Veney reported that he had located premises which might be suitable for the Thursday Night group. This was the 'Katinka' Library, in Pitt Street, which was available for 15/- per week. So long as fifteen fans turned up regularly, the charge would only be 1/- per head. Members decided that the Society should hire the 'Katinka' and make it available to the Thursday night group. "The unanimous verdict of the meeting was that there should be no formality about the Thursday group, and that no connection with the Society should be indicated." ³⁷ Veney was delegated to handle the business arrangements with Col. Sheppard, proprietor of the 'Katinka'.

The move from the Moccador to the Katinka was made on March 6, and no less than 26 fans attended the first night. Thereafter an average of 29 was maintained, a maximum of 38 being reached on April 17. It quickly became apparent that soon even larger premises would be needed if the present peak of enthusiasm was maintained. A feature of the Thursday Night gatherings was the auction of books and magazines from which the group took 10% commission. This, together with the surplus attendance money, quickly put the group on a sound financial footing. While Veney remained nominally in charge, two new fans, - Len Roth and Les Raethel, - soon became the "guardians" of the group, assisted by three other newcomers, Rosemary G. Simmons, Don K. Lawson and Bruce Purdy.

Evidence of the rising Sydney fan popularior is given by the theatre-party organised by the Futurian Society, on Veney's suggestion, to see The Day The Earth Stood Still at the Regent Theatre on March 5. No less than 83 fans and friends went along.

The last week in February and the first three weeks in March were feverishly devoted to preparations for the Convention, scheduled for March 22. Biggest job was to cope with the fans responding to the circular in Astounding, and soon Convention Secretary Graham Stone was farming out letters to other Futurians to answer. Many of the 'new' fans disclosed that they had been reading and collecting science fiction for years, but never suspected that organised activities were being carried out. Membership in Australian Science Fiction Society jumped from 70 in February to 82 in April, and two months later passed the 100 mark. Taking 1200 as the number of regular sf. readers in N.S.W., Stone concluded that before this only about 5½% of fans in this state had been known. For Sydney the figure would be higher, about 8% perhaps. "If we were better able to make contacts it would have been much higher, - and it's going up sharply as new fans write in to

ask for more information on the Convention."³⁸. Word was received that fans were coming from Melbourne, Coolangatta, Newcastle, Bathurst, Forster and Mona Vale, as well as many from the outerlying suburbs of Sydney.

Though it had been raining furiously throughout the week, Saturday dawned clear and fine. In the large hall at G.U.O.O.F. Building, fans were putting the last touches to their exhibits, while others coupled up the P.A. system, and pinned posters and movie stills around the walls. Nick Solntseff sat ready at the door with a cash box, name cards, copies of the 20 pp. printed Souvenir Booklet, and also What Is Fandom?, a splendid 12 pp. duplicated explanatory pamphlet produced by by A.S.F.S. When the doors opened master-of-ceremonies Royce Williams began a running fire of welcomes and wisecracks over the microphone. Thirty fans were waiting to be admitted, and a further twenty-eight arrived during the afternoon, making a total attendance of 58, - by far the largest fan gathering ever held in Australia. Most of those attending naturally came from the Sydney area, but a national flavour was introduced by the presence of Race Mathews, from Melbourne; Ted Butt, Newcastle; and Bob Guy, Forster. Contratulatory messages were read from Kevin Smith (Ballina, NSW), Roger N. Dard (Perth). Thomas G. L. Cockcroft (New Zealand), and A. Bertram Chandler (at sea).

As the official opening was not until 11 a.m. fans had an hour to get acquainted and look over the various exhibits. Qantas Airways had sent along two impressive items, - scenes contrived with vividly real 3-dimensional models, showing in one division the NSW coastline seen from Trans-Pacific rocketheight; in the other, a Lunar landscapae with miniature rocket and spacesuited figures, all well in Bonestell's class.

Graham Stone had arranged an extensive exhibit covering the history of science fiction in both professionsl and fan spheres. This included samples of very early magazines (from 1926 to 1932), notable fan magazines (from a 1933 Fantasy Fan to the latest Slant), and stf. magazines in other languages, including Spanish, French, Swedish, German, Dutch and Gaelic. Mr Stone conducted tours of this exhibit and gave explanatory talks to the newcomers.

Another centre of attraction was the Auction Table, where Haddon and Purdy had put on display the 150-odd books and magazines to be auctioned later in the day. On the other side of the hall was the Foundation exhibit, where Driscoll had set out a choice selection from the Library between 'rocketship' bookends. During the day he received 23 applications for borrowers' cards. On a fourth stand Futurian Press books were exhibited.

At 11 a.m. Chairman Veney formally opened the Convention. Molesworth then gave a 10-minute talk, "What Is Science Fiction?", following which Stone spoke for a similar period on "What Is Fandom?".

Next, the auction was conducted. It lasted for an hour and a half, and provoked a good deal of reckless bidding, up to 22/- being offered for current American magazines. The highest bid recorded was 30/- for the book edition of Weinbaum's Black Flame.

After lunch came the main session, run in a businesslike manner. Reports were received from the various fan organisations, questions were fired from the hall, and motions were debated on the floor. We shall return to this seesion in due course.

In the evening, a Dinner at the Mayfair was attended by fourty fans, following which films were screened. It had proven impossible to

obtain the programme originally contemplated, - to include 'Metropolis', and documentaries on rocketry, - and a scratch programme was shown, including 'The Magic Sword' (a Yugoslav fantasy), 'Life of Pasteur' and a microphotography short (French), 'The Loon's Necklace' and 'Fiddle-de-dee' (Canadian). The screening was unfortunately marred by breakdowns.

The Convention closed at 11 p.m., but groups of fans kept talking until the early hours of the morning. Nothing had been organized for Sunday, but fans met informally in several groups, the largest being a gathering of eleven at Bill Russells flat in Bondi Junction, where the history of Australian fandom was discussed in detail.

The Convention had been a grand success. Many factors emerged from it, but the most important one was that Sydney fans could work together as a team. "The problems of our isolated and lonely existence have tended to make up self-reliant and anarchistic," Veney wrote,³⁹ "but this was anything but a one-man show." Many valuable lessons had been learned by the Sydney fan community. "There were," Veney declared, "several bad points that the assembly gracefully overlooked, but which were noted by the organisers. There has been much analytical discussion of the form and style of the main day's activities. There has been much debate as to whether the most was exacted from the opportunities presenting themselves. All this is good and healthy.⁴⁰ It is my belief that the best way to crush laurels is to sit on them."

Returning now to the formal business session of the Convention, considerable discussion took place on the status of Australian Fantasy Foundation, and the possibility of setting up branch libraries in other States. Race Mathews proposed that the Trustees consider bestowing Life Membership upon fans in return for suitable gifts of books and magazines. This was seconded by Nicholson, who suggested that donation of sufficient material should exempt the borrower from further fees. Opposing the motion, Doug. Stanborough said real fans would donate material and not expect any honour in return. When put to the vote, the motion was lost by 28 to 15.

Harry Brunen moved, seconded Stone, that the Convention resolve, if not actually to boycott Thrills Inc., at least to express its disapproval of the way in which Thrills had treated the Futurian Society when it had sought Thrills' aid in publicizing the Convention. Len Roth argued that it would be better to get Thrills to improve the standard of the science fiction it published than to antagonise them by showing disapproval. Haddon said the publishers of Thrills were not interested in the opinions of fans, - it was just another source of revenue to them. Molesworth said this was not the point, - "We want fans to know that this, the first Australian Convention went on record as expressing its disapproval of trash being marketed," he said. M. Lazar moved an amendment, seconded S. Dunk, that Thrills be encouraged to publish science fiction of a "more mature and serious kind." The amendment was carried by 46 votes to 2.

P. Glick then moved, seconded Stone, that the Convention view with approval the increasing number of good quality science fiction stories appearing in local non-stf. magazines. This was also carried 46 - 2.

Dave Cohen moved, seconded Purdy, that a second Convention be held in 1953. This was carried 48 - 3.

A vote of thanks to the Convention Committee was moved by Molesworth seconded by Stone, and carried by acclamation.

Financially, the Convention had been very successful. Total takings from admission, sale of souvenir booklets, the auction, a raffle, and a donation, was £45.16.7. Total expenditure, including hire of the hall, P.A. system, catering, photographic and stenographic work, same to £22.19.8, leaving a credit balance of £22.16.8. When these figures were made available to the Futurian Society, members decided to make a donation of £5 to the Foundation, and to use the balance to publish an Official Report of the Convention, and to help finance Australian representation at overseas Conventions. The report was issued in July, in a duplicated 14 pp. quarto format with printed blue card covers. Of the 190 copies published, one was supplied to each fan who had attended or materially assisted the Convention, and the balance were sold at 1/- per copy.

The question of forming branch libraries in other states came before the Foundation meeting on April 3. The Trustees decided that the Foundation would not lend material in bulk, to individual fans, but would consider lending material in bulk to a properly constituted fan organisation, which would then be responsible for the safekeeping and return of the items. The object of this decision was not only to protect the Library, but to encourage organised activity in other States.

The 169th meeting of the Futurian Society of Sydney was held on the Monday night following the Convention as an 'open' meeting, and no less than fourteen guests attended, including five women. After Veney had formally reported the facts of the Convention to the meeting, consideration was given to the recommendations that had come forward. Those concerning Australian representation at the forthcoming British and American Conventions were immediately adopted, and two sub-committees, headed respectively by Stone and Banning, were appointed to effect representation. A display board consisting of half-a-dozen photographs taken at the Australian Convention, with suitable captions, was later sent by air to the London group. With regard to the American Convention, the Society decided to investigate the possibility of making a 16 mm. film accompanied by a commentary on a tape-recording.

An unexpected storm broke at the 'open' meeting, when a motion came forward that a women's auxiliary be formed. Rosemary Simmons asked whether women were eligible for ordinary membership, and if so, a woman's auxiliary was unnecessary. It soon became evident that the present members, - all male, - were divided on the issue. Stone and Banning spoke strongly against sex discrimination, Banning uttering his now famous, "Mr. Chairman, I'm shocked! Are we Futurians or are we Victorians?" Molesworth warned the Society that the admission of women had caused trouble in the prewar days of the club. After heated debate, a motion to admit Miss Simmons was defeated by six votes to three.

But the matter was not allowed to rest at this point. Banning and Stone exercised their right under the Constitution to demand a special meeting, which was held on April 7. Applications for membership from Doug. Nicholson, Bruce Purdy and Len Roth were carried unanimously, then a fresh application from Miss Simmons was read out. The voting resulted five in favour, five against. Director Molesworth then gave his casting vote against the motion. Banning moved that "this Society makes it clear that... it does not discriminate on the grounds of race, creed, party or sex in considering the eligibility of members." This was seconded by McGuinness, and carried.

Later in the meeting, Stone objected to the negative vote cast by the Director, and moved that the earlier decision be rescinded. This was

seconded by McGuinness, and carried, 5 - 3. Stone then moved, again seconded McGuinness, that Miss Simmons be admitted to membership. The motion was carried 6 - 4. This test-case having been established, an application for membership by Norma Hemming at the next meeting was carried unanimously. The election of Kevin Dillon on May 5 and Les Raethel on June 23 brought Society membership to twenty-three.

The fight for admission by the women did not discourage them as fans, - on the contrary, it gave a new stimulus to their activity. Banding together, they published in April the first issue of Vertical Horizons, a duplicated 8 pp. folded foolscap fanzine, under the general editorship of Rosemary Simmons, Laura Molesworth and Norma Hemming. Another new fan - Norma Williams - assisted with the second issue which appeared in May. The third issue - November, 1953 - was a one-woman effort produced by Rosemary Simmons.

At this time, also, Ken Martin and Vol Molesworth felt that the swollen fan population needed a medium of information more frequent than Stone's Stopgap, which appeared roughly on a monthly basis. Accordingly, the pair purchased a rotary duplicator and began publishing an experimental 4 pp. foolscap fanzine, Notes and Comment, the title of which indicates its policy. Copies were distributed on April 28, May 12 and May 26, but the pair experienced increasing trouble with the duplicator, and could not keep up a regular fortnightly schedule. Rather than issue Notes and Comment monthly or every six weeks, - which would destroy its value as a newspaper, they decided to abandon the project.

The Convention and its attendant publicity had brought to light many new fans. One result of this was to render the 'Katinka' Library unsuitable for the Thursday night gatherings. Larger quarters had to be found. The Futurian Society took the matter in hand, and at Meeting No.173 (May 26) Miss Simmons announced that she could obtain use of the Sydney Bridge Club in George Street. This had the added advantage of a supper service and the charge would be 3/- per head. The Society decided to hire these premises each Thursday night, and the move, made on June 5, was hailed a success by the 31 fans attending.

Meetings at the Bridge Club continued throughout the remainder of the year, with an average weekly attendance of 28. When Len Roth withdrew from activities, later in the year, Les. Raethel became custodian. Don Lawson devised an efficient means of conducting acutions. The Thursday Night group proved so profitable that it was able to lend £15 towards the cost of the 1953 Convention. Beginning as a service to Thursday Night fans, but later being partly subsidised and more widely circulated, Rex Meyer's S.F. Review was its first issue in October, and continued to appear on a monthly basis. In a rounded 1/4 to format, running from 4 to 8 pages, this publication aimed at providing critical reviews contributed by various fans of currently available magazines and books. It fulfilled a long felt need, both answering the demand for regular reviews, and providing a medium for co-operative effort.

Another result of the influx of new fans was a move to alter the structure of fan organisation. It was felt in some quarters that the Futurian Society would not be able to function efficiently with twenty-three members working in committee. Two possible remedies were suggested, - the first, that the Futurian Society should cease to be "the ruling body of fandom" and become more of a social group, and that a new Standing Committee or Council of Fandom should be set up, with delegates from the F.S.S., A.S.F.S., the Foundation, the Thursday Night group, the North Shore Futurian Society and

such other groups as may be formed by the new fans. This was discussed at an unofficial meeting at Coogee attended by Stone, Solntseff, Brunen, McGuinness, Driscoll, Williams, Haddon and Molesworth, but no action was taken.

The second plan, proposed by Arthur Haddon, was put before the Futurian Society in the form of a set of proposed amendments to the Constitution. A radically revised Constitution, drawn up by Haddon, and incorporating amendments suggested by Dave Cohen, was considered at a special F.S.S. meeting held on May 5. Haddon agreed that structural alterations were necessary, but argued that these should be carried out inside, not outside the club. "In the ~~twelve~~ years of our existence we have gained some tradition and a certain amount of prestige," he said. "Should our control pass to this Council, we would lose all that, and be to some extent ruled by a body bereft of the experience of our many years as a fan body." he proposed instead that the executive panel of the Society should be increased in number from four to seven, and that it should meet apart from the general members. The enlarged panel was to be elected annually, and would be composed of members who had attended 75% of all meetings prior to their election. All recommendations to fandum would be made by this panel and not the Society proper.

There was considerable opposition to the Haddon-Cohen amendments when the debate ensued. Stone said the existing Constitution was ideal because it was flexible. Director Molesworth surrendered the Chair to Treasurer Solntseff to speak as a private member against the motion. He said it was unrealistic to attempt to meet changes by legalistic reforms of this sort. The Constitution should be interpreted by meetings in the light of whatever circumstances arose. Stone moved, seconded Molesworth, that the amendments be rejected. The debate was gagged, and the motion carried 8 - 3.

At the 173rd meeting, held on May 26, Stone introduced as a guest Lyell Crane, an Australian fan who had just returned from a world tour, in the course of which had had contacted fan groups in U.S.A., Canada and England. Crane entertained the Society with a most interesting address, and concluded by urging that more activity be devoted to international relations.

Crane was one of seventeen fans who attended the 'science fiction weekend' early in July. Held at the Wentworth Falls Hotel in the Blue Mountains, this was the first social of its kind. Some fans spent the entire weekend at the hotel; others drove up for the Sunday. The second weekend was staged on August 9 - 10. Twelve fans went along, including Ted Butt, who made the round trip of 340 miles from Newcastle. A carload of four swelled the numbers on the Sunday. The third, held in December, attracted only seven fans, but at this time University and Tech. College exams were in full swing.

The collapse of Thrills with its 23rd issue in June confirmed Doug. Nicholson in his idea of publishing a semi-professional magazine which would serve as a 'forerunner' for the real thing. "When we get our long-awaited, real Aussie promag," Nicholson wrote, "we want it to spring from fandom, and have the interests of fandom at heart." Accordingly he invited contributions to Forerunner, a magazine "of indefinite size and frequency designed to feel the way for a professional, adult, Australian science-fiction magazine." Nicholson was critical of the type of fan magazine that was being produced; they were, in his estimation, an outlet for fan gossip. "This preoccupation with the trivia of fandom itself," he wrote, "is a fine

case of tail-chasing. It could be called a second derivative of science fiction, - a concentration on the means in which the end has been largely lost sight of..." The first issue of Forerunner appeared in Spring, 1952, in an 80 pp. 4to format. The bulk of the issue was duplicated, with a small photolitho insert, and the pages were stapled between overlapping card covers. Some 200 copies were published, and apart from a few retained for overseas fans, the total issue sold readily. Forerunner no.1 contained 30,000 words, - the first half of a serial by Molesworth, short stories by Norma Hemming, Norma Williams, C. Gilbert, and Royce Williams, verse by Lex Banning, and an article by Nicholson.

The 174th meeting of the Futurian Society, held on June 23, was largely taken up with plans for the Fifth Sydney Conference. This was the last meeting attended by William D. Veney, who had rendered such outstanding service to Sydney fandom in the past year. Appropriately enough, Veney held the Chair for this meeting, the Director being unable to get along. Late in July, Veney left Sydney to take a position in Launceston (Tasmania), after nominating Ken Martin to act in his place as Chairman of the Conference.

Attendance at the Fifth Sydney Conference, held at the G.U.D.O.F. Hall, on Saturday, July 19, was disappointing. Although nearly 100 invitations had been sent out, only 19 fans attended. Those present were considerably cheered by a telegram from Veney, who had spent a few days in Melbourne on his way to Tasmania. Veney reported that a local fan group had been formed in Melbourne, and a library committee set up, headed by R.J. McCubbin and Race Mathews.

The Conference heard a report on A.S.F.S. by Graham Stone, who told of a rapidly growing membership, continued publication of Stopgap and special leaflets, a new magazine to be published later, and a planned division of executive duties. Ian Driscoll, reporting on Australian Fantasy Foundation, told of a healthy financial state, steady additions to the library, and a proposed branch in Melbourne. A new catalogue was made available. Rosemary Simmons then reported on the Vertical Horizons group, and Doug. Nicholson outlined his plans for Forerunner.

Graham Stone reported that to effect Australian representation at the London Convention, a display had been prepared, comprising six photographs taken at the First Australian Convention, with identifying captions, plus a selection of Australian fan publications, and a message of goodwill. This material had been airmailed to E.J. Carnell, editor of New Worlds, who had set it up prominently in the Convention hall. A letter of acknowledgement had been received from Secretary Frank Arnold, who had added that the display would also be placed on view at a regional gathering in Manchester.

The rest of the Conference was devoted to discussion of the 1953 Australian Convention. It was decided that it should be spread over three days, preferably the last weekend in April. Nominations for the Convention Committee were called for, and a tentative list of names referred to the Futurian Society for ratification.

At the 175th meeting of the Society (held on July 28), elections for officebearers fell due. Following his excellent handling of the Fifth Conference, Ken Martin was elected Director unopposed. Vol Molesworth became Vice-Director; Len Roth, Treasurer; Arthur Hoddon, Secretary; and Rosemary Simmons, Assistant Secretary. David Cohen volunteered for the position of Public Relations Officer. At the next meeting, however, he relinquished this post due to pressure of private business.

When the Conference recommendations came up for discussion, Haddon moved that a liaison officer be appointed who would be responsible for the working of the Convention Committee between then and the date of the Convention. This was seconded by Stone, and carried 11 - 1.

For the position of Convention Chairman, four members were nominated - Haddon, Martin, Molesworth, and Nicholson. Molesworth was elected by preferential voting.

Discussion was resumed at a special meeting held at the Katunka on a Sunday, August 3. A proposed programme, drawn up by Molesworth and Stone, was adopted: it provided for a cocktail party on the Friday night, a general "Exposition of Science Fiction" on Saturday (exhibits and talks), films on Saturday night, the auction Sunday morning, and the formal business session Sunday afternoon. Dates were fixed at May 1-2-3, 1953.

The remaining members of the Convention Committee were then elected, as follows:

Liaison Officer:	{	A.W. Haddon
Secretary:		
Treasurer:		L. Roth
Auctioneer:		B. Purdy
Films:		L. Banning
Booklet:		V. Molesworth
Publicity: (general)		Miss Simmons
(overseas)		R.D. Nicholson
Master of Ceremonies:		K. Martin.

Meanwhile, a storm was brewing in Australian Fantasy Foundation. Of the seven trustees appointed in July, 1952, two were no longer in Sydney (Macoboy and Veney), and three had withdrawn from the active fan field (Larnach, Russell, and Solntseff). Solntseff had resigned from the Secretary-Treasurership, and the administration of the library was being carried on by Ian Driscoll (proxy for Macoboy) assisted by Molesworth and Stone. Now, however, Driscoll found that he could not carry on as Librarian, and Molesworth asked that the Library, which had been housed for some time at his home, be moved elsewhere. A meeting of the Trust was convened on August 7, at which Driscoll formally tendered his resignation as Librarian. Two offers were then made to house and administer the library, - one from Graham Stone, the other from Arthur Haddon. Stone said that Haddon was not a Trustee, and that if Haddon's offer was accepted, the Trust would be allowing the library to pass from out of its control, and would therefore violate its constitution. Others present took the view that the Trust had the power to appoint a non-Trustee as its agent, and proceeded to appoint Haddon. Stone thereupon tendered a letter of resignation; he declared that the Trust had defaulted and the library automatically reverted to the F.S.S. The meeting then elected Haddon to the vacancy on the Trust caused by Stone's resignation.

The dispute was brought before the notice of the Futurian Society at its 177th meeting, held on August 25. Haddon said that the Foundation records given to him "were in a chaotic state, and had been obtained only after difficulty." He accused Stone of withholding monies which were the

property of the Foundation. Stone, in reply, said he had kept certain records and monies because, "with the Foundation no longer in existence, there were no officers of that body to whom he could hand those records and monies." In reply to Banning, who asked if the F.S.S. had any jurisdiction over the Foundation, the Director said he had obtained a legal opinion, and had been informed that since the original transfer document did not contain the word 'irrevocable', the original owners could regain control whenever the Trust was shown to have violated its agreement.

Haddon moved, seconded Simmons, that the Society accept the validity of the transfer document, and recognise the existing body of trustees. The motion was lost, 2 - 3. Molesworth then moved, seconded Raethel, that the Society invoke the machinery of the Futurian Court of Inquiry to investigate whether the transfer document was valid, and if the Trust existed. This was carried, 7 - 1, Stone in opposition, Banning and Nicholson abstaining.

The exact form that such an Inquiry should take was debated at the next two meetings (Sept. 22 and Oct. 27). Throughout this period, Haddon took the view that the legality of the Trust was sub judice, and ceased to operate the library. This caused considerable dissatisfaction among fans attending the Thursday Night gatherings, who were deprived of reading matter. To some observers, this two months' delay appeared to be procrastination; to others, it indicated that the question was very thoroughly probed before the final decision was made. However, at Meeting 179, it was moved Haddon, seconded Stone, that the Court of Inquiry be held. The motion was carried 9 - 1. Members had obviously decided the Inquiry was necessary. To make it equally clear that no attack on personalities was intended, the meeting defeated by 7 votes to 4 a further motion by Haddon that "an Inquiry be held to investigate the actions and competence of the trustees only."

The second sitting of the Futurian Court of Inquiry was held at the Katinka library on December 17. Presiding was F.S.S. Director Ken Martin, assisted by Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, LL.B., as Judge-advocate; and Vol Molesworth, as Examiner. Although notices had been sent by registered post to all Trustees, only three attended. Evidence was given by Simmons, Haddon, Dillon, Stone, Glick, Driscoll, and Molesworth. A transcript of the proceedings, running to 23 closed-typed foolscap pages, is in the club files.

In his summing-up, the Examiner made the following submissions: (1) that the recommendation made by the general fan rally on June 1, 1950, was merely that the F.S.S. should wind up its affairs, not that the Society should hand over its property to a Trust; (2) that Meeting 159 of the Society, at which the decision was made to hand over the library, was not legally convened; (3) that anything done by the persons Macoboy, Molesworth and Solntseff in a coffee shop on June 22, 1950 was in no way binding on the Society; (4) that the transfer document was bad in law; (5) that since the document contained only six of the seven required signatures, there was no evidence that any Foundation existed; (6) that even if it did exist, the Foundation had violated its own constitution by not holding regular meetings and elections, improperly replacing a Trustee, and failing to pay stipulated salaries.

Leaving aside the legal aspect, he continued, the spirit of the 1950 decisions was to accumulate a collection of books and magazines and administer it by responsible individuals for the use of Australian fans. He submitted that the continuance of the Trust in its present form would not achieve this.

The Judge-advocate stated that, on the evidence, no Trust of the library had ever been validly constituted. An essential condition for the validity of Meeting 159 had not been complied with, and the status of minutes, in law, was such that, however confirmed or ratified, they could not retrospectively validate a meeting which, in law, was never held. The transfer document was defective because it did not contain any words which conveyed property to trustees for the benefit of a specific class of persons.

"I am inclined to believe that all the property, the subject of this Inquiry, is still the property of the original donors," he declared. "We have before us a practical, and not a legal, problem. We are to do certainly as nearly as possible what the donors intended."

To this end, he said, the Futurian Society should make completely new provision for the control, ownership and administration of the library. The Society should amend its Constitution and Rules to ensure legal ownership of the library, and provide authority for a librarian to administer the library on the Society's behalf.

These recommendations came before the Futurian Society early in the New Year, and, as we shall see, were acted upon. The Society was, inevitably, criticised for the action it had taken, the Inquiry being described in one quarter as "a trial of the trustees", in another as "the rape of Foundation". The facts, however, are incontrovertible, and a glance at the transcript will show that no person was "on trial": the Inquiry conformed itself to questions of law. There may have been other solutions, and the question was — as Mr. Hilbery stated — "a practical one." The Futurian Society resumed control of the Library early in 1953, and once again it was opened to general fan borrowing. The Librarian became responsible to a regularly meeting body, with regularly elected officers. The future alone could determine whether the move was beneficial to fandom.

The recommendation made at the First Convention, that Australia should be represented at the 10th Anniversary World Convention, to be held in Chicago on August 30 - 31 and September 1, had been adopted by the Futurian Society. At first, it was hoped to send either a short film, or a series of slides, accompanied by a tape-recording. This, however, proved too expensive, and eventually the Society decided to make a double-sided 12in recording. This was cut at the Chas. E. Blake studios on Friday, August 8, and airmailed to America, the total cost being £3.14.0. The Society was dismayed to hear later that the record had arrived damaged, and was not played at Chicago.

In the last quarter of 1952, the Society turned more attention to the Second Australian Convention. Haddon reported that 3,000 circulars would be printed for insertion in a reprint edition of Astounding. Nicholson reported that a large number of circulars had been sent to professional and fan publishers, and organisations, overseas. Haddon reported that the Woollahra Gold Club had been booked for the cocktail party, the G.U.O.O.F. Hall for the Saturday (12.30 to 11 p.m.), and the Bridge Club for Sunday. Convention charges were settled at a guinea for the party; 10/- for the Convention. Changes were made in the Convention Committee, Haddon taking over the Treasurer and The Booklet, Don Lawson the Films and Auction, and Stone local fan publicity.

During the year, Les Raethel, Jack Leggett and Christine Davison had joined the Futurian Society, while Roy Williams, Norma Hemming, David Cohen, Lex Banning, Ian Driscoll and Wm D. Veney had resigned. On December 30,

membership stood at nineteen. Fees were increased to two quineas a year, on November 24.

Meanwhile, another fan group had become active in Sydney. This was the North Shore Futurian Society, formed by M.A. Bos and J.G. Crawford shortly after the First Convention. Composed mainly of younger fans, the group received considerable help in the early stages from Wm. D. Veney. Only one meeting of the club was held in 1952, attended by eight members. Bos was elected President, and G.W. Hubble Vice-President. On the Library side, however, rapid progress was achieved; starting on April 1, with only four borrowers and 34 books and magazines, it had twelve borrowers and 50 items by June; 49 borrowers and 200 items in October, and 63 borrowers and 250 items by the end of the year. In October, the N.S.F.S. produced the first issue of its Notesheet, a single roneoed flip sheet, and plans were prepared for a club magazine, Terrific. In Bos' words, "somewhere along the line the club and library merged".

In the latter half of 1952, activities in other States began to take substantial form. In Melbourne, Race Mathews and Bob McCubbin organised regular fortnightly gatherings of fans at each others' homes, until their numbers grew so large - no less than seventeen turning up at McCubbin's home one night - that it became necessary to find public premises. At a meeting held at Mathews' home, attended by McCubbin, Marshall MacLennan, Gordon Kirby and Dick Jenssen, it was decided to form the Melbourne Science Fiction Group, a loose sort of organisation analogous to the Thursday Night group in Sydney. Meetings began at Vals' Coffee Lounge on August 14, and continued each week until a roll-up of nineteen forced a further move to the basement of the Oddfellows' Hall in Latrobe Street on November 14. Among the new active members of the group were Leo Harding, Mervyn Binns, and Ian Crozier. Early in the piece the Melbourne fans began a library, and film screenings were regularly given. As the year drew to a close, plans were being finalised for the publication of several fanzines.

For many years, Queensland's sole voice had been that of Chas.S. Mustchin, veteran fan residing at Coolangatta. Early in 1952, however, Kevin Smith moved to nearby Ballina, and the two began working to stir up interest locally. Smith contacted Frank Bryning in Brisbane, who in turn contacted John Gregor, Harry Brook, G.R. Tafe, and other fans. The field was ripe for organisation when Wm.D. Veney left Tasmania in November and transferred his employment to Brisbane. There was an historic occasion on November 24, when Mustchin and Veney, who had been corresponding for 12 years, met for the first time at Bryning's home. Soon regular meetings were being held in Brisbane, and plans were considered for a library and a fanzine. Neither Brisbane nor Melbourne, however, got into full swing until early in 1953.

In Adelaide, several new fans had come to light, among whom Ian Moyes and Mrs J. Joyce were the most active.

Throughout the year, membership had more than doubled in the national organisation, Australian Science Fiction Society. The actual breakdown in figures is:

January	62
February	70
April	82
May	93

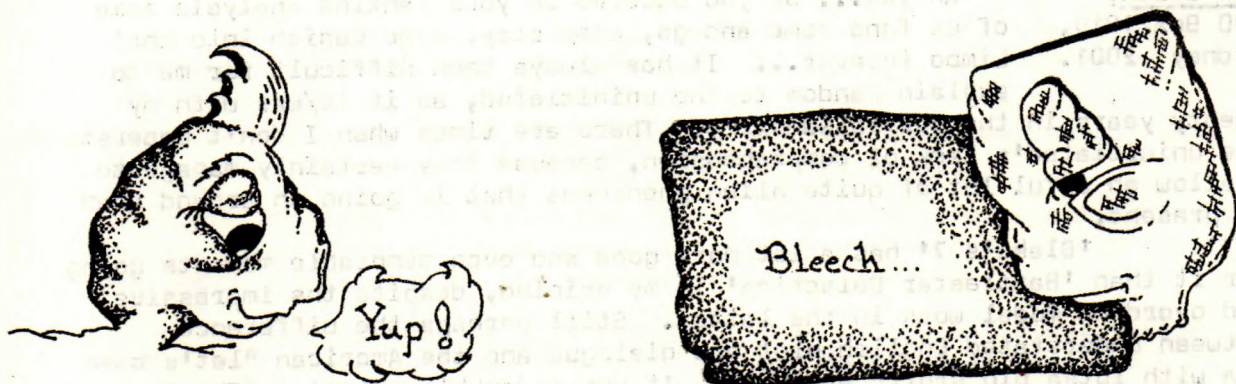
June
August
November
December

Graham Stone had continued publication of Stopgap on a fairly regular monthly basis, the last issue (no.11) appearing in November. This was followed, in December, by 'A Letter From Sydney', in a 3 pp. folded f'cap roneo'd format. The demise of Stopgap, however, heralded a new publication in 1953.

During 1952, the increased circulation of Stopgap, had caused Stone to raise membership fees to 5/- a year, still only a nominal charge. The administration had increased to such proportion that in July Stone had appointed Lyell Crane as Secretary, mainly to assist with correspondence, and then elevated himself to President.

As activity grew in Victoria and South Australia, he appointed Race Mathews local secretary in Melbourne, and Ian Moyes local secretary in Adelaide.

On an Australia-wide front, fan activity was building up its timpo as 1952 drew to a close.



THE R & R DEPT.

Marc Ortelieb I'm not sure I like the idea of mentioning Cattlecar
8 Melanto Ave Galaxative in the same paragraph as the Dr. and Blake. Not
Camden Park, that I'm particularly enamoured of Dr. Who, it's just that
S.A. 5038 I find BG absolute rubbish.

Anyway, having established the
nicities, on to the nit picking. I found your piece on Australian fanzines
fascinating, but could I make a couple of corrections? My first zine,
though I'm not sure I want people to remember it, was Tanstaaf1 (original,
huh?) and it saw the light in September 1975. I'm not sure why you chose
the address you did. At that time, my address was c/- Naracoorts High
School. MDR 2 was dated December 1975. MINARDOR 5 was published in June
1978, but '78 was a particularly poor year for me, until Linda moved over
late in that year. ARIEL 1 didn't come out until February 1979, not 1978.
ARIEL 2 came out in June 1979. The final confuser was your listing for
September 1979. The zine I published then was Q36A not MDR 6. (Q36A was
listed as MDR 7 in the contents, but then, it was also listed as MARC 11,
MINARDOR 6 and ARIEL 3.)

[The addresses I usually gave were the latest ones.
The article did get locs, though, didn't it.]

Bob Smith, Ah yes... as you observe in your fanzine analysis some
GPO Box 1019, of us fans come and go, some stay, some vanish into that
Sydney 2001. Limbo forever... It has always been difficult for me to
explain Fandom to the uninitiated, as it is/was with my
twenty years in the Australian Army. There are times when I don't understand
the uninitiated's lack of comprehension, because they certainly manage to
swallow an awful lot of quite alien phenomena that is going on around them
at present.

'Blake's 7' has a lot more good and even memorable moments going
for it than 'Battlestar Galactica' in my opinion, despite the impressive
and overdone model work in the latter. Still perhaps the difference
between understated English plot and dialogue and the American "let's bash
'em with lotsa big stuff" attitude? It was enjoyable watching "The Omega
Man" again last Saturday night, although I have always had difficulty
relating it to Matheson's yarn, for fairly obvious reasons to all us dedic-
ated and knowledgeable sf fans. I don't read a great deal of science fiction
on the train, Simak's Way Station being a recent exception; my own "sense
of wonder" leans towards such as: Boyce's Extraterrestrial Encounter, Brand's
Space Colonies, Ridpath's Messages from the Stars, Lunan's New Wrrlds for
Old, Manders' Time and The Space Traveller, Calder's Einstein's Universe,
and a fascinating book out of which falls more ideas than any Heinlein
novel: Hofstadter's Godel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid. All this
high-flown mind-spreading is tempered with some dips into The Best of Saki...
Oh, there's lots more books (and train trips, unfortunately), but I'm sure
you get the point.

I would no doubt have been more comfortable with your 1964-71 fanzines, and probably PB 1 is packed away in half dozen boxes Lyn and I have put off unpacking (a 1971 SFR fell out of one of 'em recently), but Part 11 made interesting reading just the same. I have never been particularly happy with fanzine "explosions" and don't think I became too involved with many of those you list for the period. Even with the USSF fanzines of the 1950's and 60's I managed to stay loyal to about half a dozen (and my favourite fanzine will always be CRY OF THE NAMELESS!), although somehow managing to lap up the promag "explssion" of those days with an enthusiasm that was probably pathetic to observe.

Adrienne Losin
c/- Croydon High,
Croydon 3136.

TM is really back to its high standard, but there's a slightly incorrect piece of info about my zine 'TUTM'. It began as an apa contribution to APES in Adelaide, then a few copies circulated in trade, way back in 1979. (I think March, 1979, actually.) Then in December, once my 'DoctorWho' club was under way, the first issue was bulk-mailed; however that ish was printed in Nov. The theme was been varied SF and its cults, my views and travels, quizzes, polls, etc.

Now I have three special issues under way: DOCTOR WHO, BLAKE'S 7 and S-F.

Well, that looks like it for this issue. In a letter received yesterday from Mary Long, she mentioned she has not received TM 25. It was bulk posted on 7th of June, 1980 - which makes it over 10 weeks. (It takes about 8 weeks for surface mail to get from North America to Aust.). Which is going to make for a long-drawn out lettercol.

Oversaes mail rates for TM are double that for local rates; which means that after next issue there will be a number dropped (both local and overseas) because of non response.

As mentioned in the editorial, I am low on articles, fiction, poetry and reviews. If anyone out there can help. I am also short on good artwork.

Because of my having to have sick leave instead of my rec leave last week, I hope to hold over one week: of my rec leave till next year and time it so I can go to the Con in Adelaide. I'll be driving so as to miss the glacial climate in Melbourne.

The Molesworth History is now about 2/3 completed - which means that about 30% of the issue space when it is finished will be vacant: unless someone has any additional Australian fandom history they may wish to send me? On conclusion of the Molesworth History it will be available in board covers for some slight fee.

This last stencil is being typed on 6/9/80. It'll be posted sometime after payday (11/9/80). See you all. - Ron.

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