

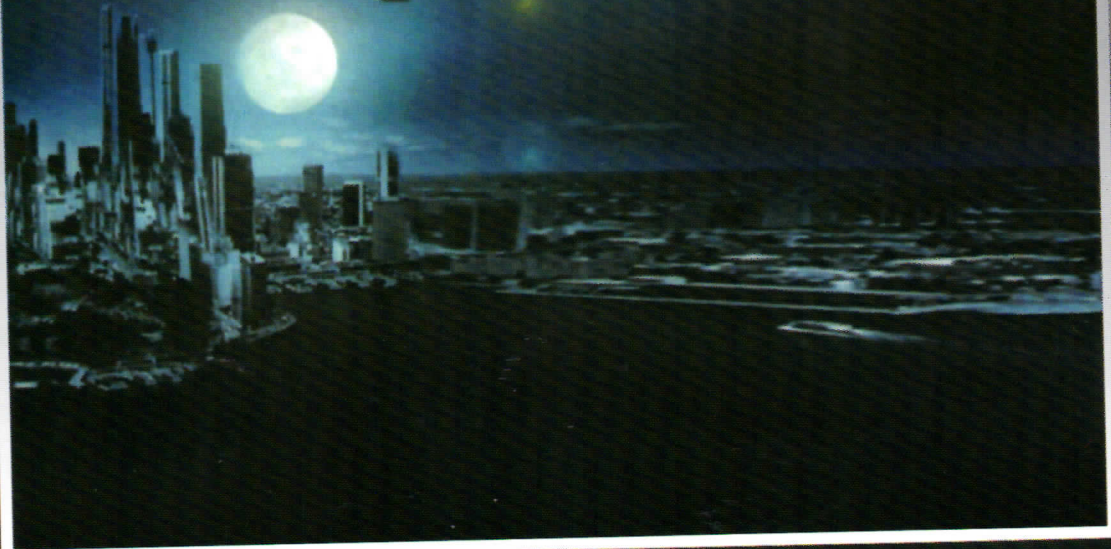
conflux

The 43rd Australian National
Science Fiction Convention
Canberra, 23-26 April 2004



Nelson Angeles

MARIANNE
DE PIERRES



In the future there is only one rule:
the media rule ... The first novel featuring
the irrepressible Parrish Plessis.



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Welcome to Conflux,



the first National Science Fiction Convention (Natcon) to be held in Canberra since 1987. I welcome you as Chair, as a Canberran and as a fan.

This Natcon, we are lucky to have Greg Benford, Sean McMullen, Karen Herkes as guests and Nick Stathopoulos as Master of Ceremonies. They will all help make for a rich and interesting program.

I would like to thank, wholeheartedly, the rest of the panelists who cooperated by indicating early that they were coming to Conflux by sending bios and photos so that they could be displayed on the website. They were full of ideas for the program too. We have so many panelists that it is a veritable who's who of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror in Australia. Maxine McArthur and Michael Kraaz have provided invaluable assistance with the program.

Conflux is presenting an artshow, a short story competition, masquerade, great debate, theatre plays, radio plays, illustrators, animators, a varied line up of traders and an awards ceremony. Don't overlook the souvenir booklet for some great content. As well as some further detailed information on our guests and MC, we have the history of Natcons and an article on Canberra fan history.

Conflux has also been lucky in its sponsors and those organisations that helped us put the convention together. The ACT Writers Centre has sponsored us and given great support to the convention and speculative fiction in Canberra. Special mentions also go to Dymocks Belconnen, Harper Collins, the Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild, Les Petersen for his art work and Faith Sinnott for her work in publishing this souvenir booklet.

In any committee there are those who work hard, give so much of their time and have so much expertise that one could honestly say that the event wouldn't happen without them. Rose Mitchell and Mark Loney have gone the extra mile, and I wholeheartedly thank them for their support. I appreciate all the help and assistance from the committee.

Thanks to Vanessa Jacobsen for her vision in putting the bid together and assembling the committee that has worked hard to bring Conflux into being. For business and moral support the committee is grateful to the Victorian Science Fiction Convention Inc.

Once again welcome and enjoy!

Donna Hanson

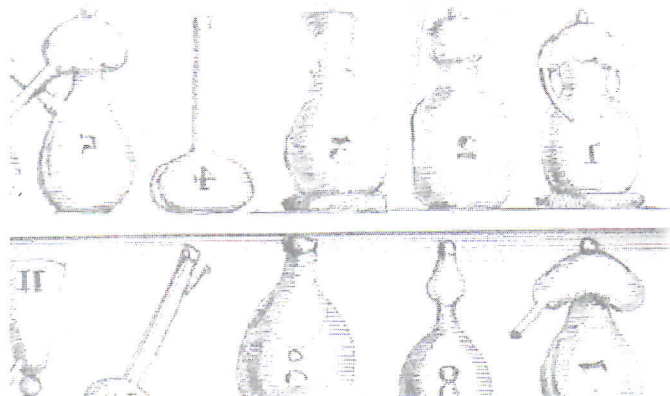
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Conflux

43rd National

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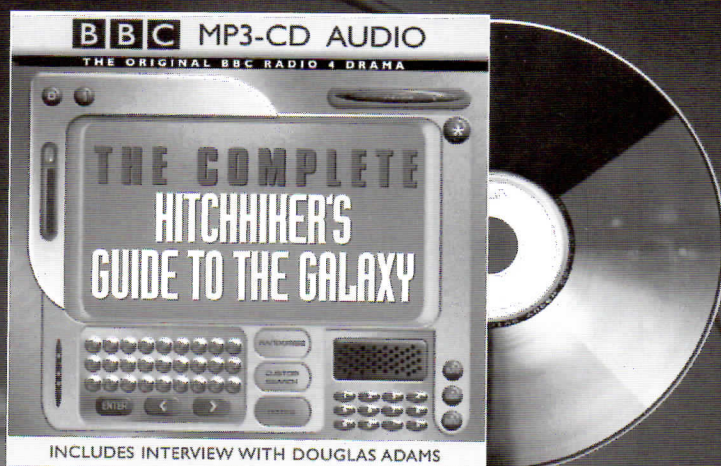
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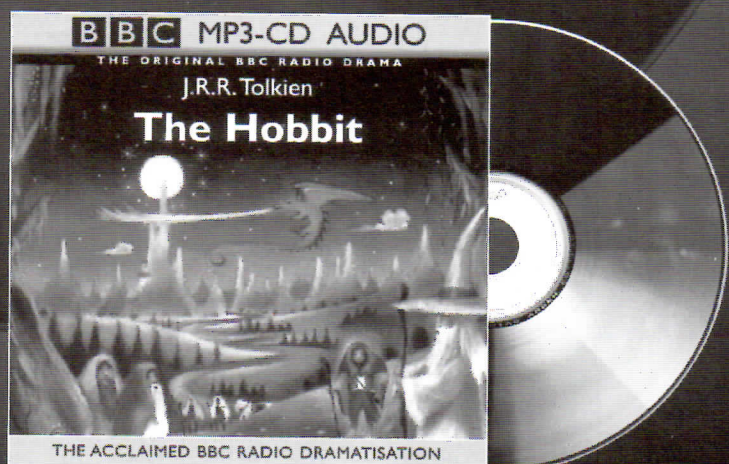
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Short Story Competition: Nicole Murphy
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Chair Emeritus: Vanessa Jacobsen

Conflux wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the following people who helped make the convention a success:

Sue-Ann Barber, Alison Barton, Zara Baxter, David Cake, Russell Farr, Bruce Gillespie, Grant Gittus, Edwina Harvey, Emma Hawkes, Robert Hoge, Rob Jan, Stephan Lakh, Ken Moylan, Marc Ortlieb, Les Petersen, Les Robinson, Brad Rowe, Ted Scribner, Mavis Smith, Cat Sparks, Brian & Elizabeth Trump, Sean Williams, Thyme Magazine, IRS, Canberra SF Society, Albion Books, ASIM, Aurealis, Austrek, Best of Both Worlds, Borderlands, Borders Skygarden, Cancon, Collins Superstore, Continuum, Critical Mass, Cyber Café, Dymocks Belconnen, Fahrenheit Books, Freecons, Friends of Science Fiction, Galaxy Books, Gaslight Books, Genghiscon, Infinitas Books, Known Space Books, Magic Casements, Make it Up, MARS Society, Melb Science Fiction Club, Multiverse, Orb Magazine, Pulp Fiction Books, SA Writers Centre, Sisters in Crime, Starwalking Inc, Swancon, Sybers Books, Vision QLD, Weard, Whovention

There are sure to be a whole lot of people who will be helping out at the last moment. Unfortunately, too late to be named personally in this booklet. Your help is appreciated, very much. *Thank you.*

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Guests of Honour

Greg Benford
Sean McMullen
Karen Herkes (Fan Guest of Honour)
Nick Stathopoulos (MC)
Sean Williams & Chuck McKenzie (DJs)
Bob Eggleton (Art Show Judge)

Conflux is convened under the auspices of the Victorian Science Fiction Conventions Inc and as such, is governed by its rules and regulations. Victorian Science Fiction Conventions Inc. is a not-for-profit association incorporated under the Victorian Associations Act, 1994.

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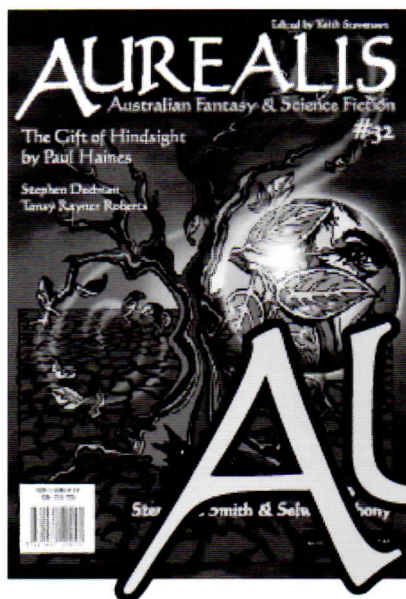
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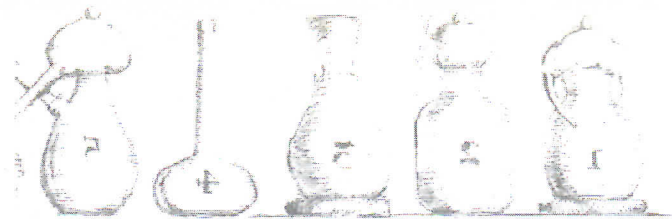
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Natcons



Reminiscenced by Susan Batho

"What was it that that convention sought to achieve? So far as I can remember, the purpose was to bring together "fans" who had known each other through fanzines, letters, occasional visits, and who wanted to share more of one another's company. There was not then, nor for several more years, any notion of a "recruiting drive". So there was no need to arrange a program for "diverse interests" - we were all already bonded by common interests. These common interests were NOT, for example, "lit fandom" or any other branch of SF, but rather the much simpler idea - being interested in all branches of SF (not excluding specialities) and being interested in one another."

John Foyster 22 March 2002

These words describe the feeling behind the third wave of Australian Science Fiction Conventions, which began in 1969 and have continued in an almost-unbroken chain until this convention, the 43rd National Speculative Fiction Convention, Conflux.

The first wave of National SF Conventions was started in 1952 in the underground hall of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in Sydney. A fairly appropriate setting, with no guests of honour but a great deal of enthusiasm for the genre. It was entitled the First Australian S.F. (standing for Science Fiction) Convention. No "cute" names for these events until 1955 and Sydcon (held in Sydney yet again), followed by the first Victorian natcon, Olympicon, held after the Olympic Games in Melbourne in December 1956. Perhaps it was the lateness in the year and thus not much lead up time to the next convention, that put the next Natcon at Easter 1958 in Victoria again. Then there were none for a number of years.

The second wave was a testing of the waters by John Foyster in 1966 with the 7th Australian SF Convention in Melbourne.

Then fandom took a breath, met over many cups of coffee, and made the commitment to hold the 8th Australian SF Convention in 1969. The rest is history as they say.

But the course to today's convention has not always been smooth. In the 70's people who enjoyed visual science fiction (yes, the Dreaded SF Media fans) felt that their publications, their writing and their interests were not being covered adequately by the Natcons of the day. They were not likely to appear on the voting ballots of the Ditmars, nor given much in the way of programming at all. So the National SF Media Conventions were discussed and finally constitutionalised and held from 1981 in Brisbane, giving out their own ASFMA Awards. Thus two separate entities appeared on the fannish calendar - some people thinking, mistakenly, that the attendees would not cross between both - but then, some people don't realise exactly what Foyster was saying - we were all already bonded by common interest - was true. The schism between literary and media interests was mostly healed by the 1994 Natcon, Constantinople, winning the bid for both the National SF Convention and National SF Media Convention, which started a trend to bring all facets of SF interests back to the one meeting place, the Natcon.

The Natcon is the site of the many achievement and popularity

awards given out by organisations and fannish peers; and it is also the place wherein is held the oh-so-serious business meeting for conducting business about the rules and regulations and whys and wherefores of Natcons. Important stuff. Of course, never-to-be-taken-lightly.

For instance, the right to hold the 1985 Natcon was won by a bid from Seattle, USA presented at the 1983 Natcon by Cliff Wind and Jerry Kaufman. Unfortunately the true 1985 Natcon--Spawncon--was never held due to a motion at the 1984 Natcon business session, which retroactively ruled Adelaide to be the site. Thus Advention 85 became Bogus Natcon.

There are several things to note about Natcons: the media program does not necessarily mean just the video program; Natcons don't necessarily need a Guest of Honour - there have been many with none. At least one had a virtual guest and even ones that were pure fabrications of fans (for instance when John Ossian and KUF Widdershins were announced as Guests of Honour of Advention 81, they were both pen-names of John Foyster). Natcons are not always held at Easter - actually any long weekend will do and there are a few to pick from. One in a school or University holiday is an added bonus. We just want to have as much time having fun as we can. Natcons are the best place for bid parties, room parties, and to play Rail Baron - actually, that's all true.

I attended my first Natcon in 1972 and have vivid memories of it. I was told that all con goers skinny-dipped in the hotel pool at midnight. Actually, Syncon '72 was the first national convention to venture into the world of motels and their conference facilities instead of a public hall so I was very gullible. Being called a femmefan in a tone of voice that said where was my male? Women fans had to belong to a male fan somewhere along the line, or be considered something very strange indeed, in those days. Being left in a room to discuss "what ifs" in Star Trek

time-lines with Diane Marchant because I was obviously a Trekkie, being female, just out of my teens, and supposedly interested in science fiction. And trading fanzines with people to be devoured the minute I got home. Ah, those were the days! Of course, I also met people I had corresponded with, sat at the knees of my favourite author at the time, and made friendships I still enjoy today.

Hopefully, this is exactly what you will find if this is your first Natcon. If you are an old hand at them, may they continue to be the meeting place of like-minded friends first and foremost.

Australian National

Science Fiction Conventions

1st Australian S.F. Convention, March 22nd 1952, G.U.O.O.F. Hall Sydney, No GoH, Chair: Bill Veney

2nd Australian S.F. Convention, May 1953, G.U.O.O.F. Hall Sydney, No GoH, Chair: Arthur Haddon,

3rd Australian S.F. Convention, April 1954, Federation Hall Sydney, No GoH, Chair: Walter Judd

Sydcon March 1955, Dunbar's House Watson's Bay N.S.W., GoH: A. Bertram Chandler, Chair: Arthur Haddon

Olympicon, December 1956, Richmond Town Hall Victoria, GoH: Frank Brynning, Chair: Bob McCubbin

6th Australian S.F. Convention, April 1958, Richmond Town Hall Victoria, No GoH, Chair: Bob McCubbin

7th Australian S.F. Convention, Melbourne, Easter 1966, No GoH, Chair: John Foyster

8th Australian S.F. Convention, MSFC Melbourne, April 1969, GsoH: Lee Harding, John Foyster, HonSec: Bill Wright

9th Australian S.F. Convention, Capri Theatre Murrumbena Melbourne, March 1970, No GoH, Chairs: Merv Binns, John Bangsund, John Foyster Lee Harding

10th Australian S.F. Convention, January 1971, University of Melbourne, GoH: Robin Johnson, Chairs: John Foyster Lee Harding & Leigh Edmonds

Syncon '72, August 1972, Squire Motor Inn Bondi N.S.W., GoH Leslie Leigh Luttrell, Chair: Shayne McCormack, Bob Smith

Advention 2, August 1973, Lincoln College Adelaide, GoH: John Foyster, Chair: Paul Stokes Alan Sandercock

Ozcon, August 1974, Victoria Hotel Melbourne, GoH: Merv Binns Fan GoH: John Bangsund, Chair: Ken Ford

Syncon '75, January 1975, Macquarie University Sydney, No GoH, Chairs: Ron & Sue Clarke

Bofcon August 1976, Noah's Palmlake Motor Inn Melbourne, No GoH, Boss of BofCon: Carey Handfield

A-Con 7 July 1977, St Vincent Hotel Glenelg S.A., GoH: Bill Rotsler, Chair: Allan Bray

Unicon IV, March 1978, Melbourne Townhouse, GsoH Brian Aldiss & Roger Zelazny, Chairs: Roger Weddall & Alan Wilson (Also the annual Australian Tertiary Science Fiction Association Convention.)

Syncon '79 August 1979, New Crest Hotel Kings Cross Sydney, GsoH: Gordon R. Dickson, Ken Fletcher & Linda Lounsbury, Kouichi Yamamoto, Chairs: Peter Toluzzi & Robin Johnson

Swancon 5, August 1980, Park Towers Hotel Perth, GsoH: Anne McCaffrey, Shayne McCormack, Grant Stone, Chairing: Julia Curtis

Advention '81, June 1981, Oberoi Hotel Adelaide, GsoH: Frank Herbert, John Ossian, * K.U.F. Widdershins*, co-Chair Allan Bray & Jeff Harris (Note: * Both are John Foyster)

Tschaicon April 1982, Melbourne Town House, GsoH: Jack Vance, Leanne Frahm, Eric Lindsay, Chair Justin Ackroyd

Syncon '83 June 1983, Shore Inn Sydney, GsoH: Harlan Ellison, Dr Van Ikin, Convenor Jack R. Herman

Eurekacon April 1984, Victoria Hotel Melbourne, GoH George Turner, Co-chairpersons Christine & Derrick Ashby

Spawncon 1985 Seattle, USA

Bogus 1985 NatCon - Adventon '85, The Townhouse Adelaide, GoH Lee Harding, Convenor Jeff Harris

Swancon XI, March 1986, Miss Maud Hotel Perth, GsoH: C.J. Cherryh & Jack Herman, Chair: Erik Harding

Capcon, April 1987, Canberra Parkroyal Hotel, GsoH: Robert & Lynn Asprin, Lynn Abbey, John Newman, Chair: Mark Denbow

Conviction June 1988, Shore Motor Inn Artarmon N.S.W., GsoH: Spider & Jeanne Robinson Carey Handfield, Chair: Jack R. Herman

Swancon 14 March 1989, The King's Ambassador Hotel Perth, GsoH: John Varley, Bob Shaw & Paul J. Stevens, Chairing: Cindy Evans

Danse Macabre April 1990, The Diplomat Motor Inn Melbourne, GoHs George R.R. Martin & Eric Lindsay Chair: Roger Weddall,

Suncon March 1991, Brisbane Gateway Hotel, GsoH Patrick Tilley [Harlan Ellison & Leigh Edmonds] Chair: Patricia Anderson

Syncon '92 April 1992, The Shore Motor Inn Artarmon N.S.W., GsoH: Michael Whelan, Nick Stathopoulos, Sean McMullen Chair: Rod Kearins

Swancon 18, April 1993, The Ascot Inn Perth, GsoH: Terry Pratchett, Robert Jordan & Craig Hilton, Chair: Dave Luckett

Constantinople, April 1994, Southern Cross Melbourne, GsoH: William Gibson, Bruce Gillespie, Medge & Bean, & Narelle Harris, Chair: Donna Heenan (This was also the 1994 Media Natcon)

Thyiacon, June 1995, Hadley's Hotel Hobart GsoH: Kim Stanley Robinson, Peter Nichols, Grant Stone Chairs Robin Johnson & Cary Lenehan

Festival of the Imagination April 1996, King's Perth Hotel GsoH: Storm Constantine, Neil Gaiman & Robin Pen Chairs: Richard Scriven & Sue Ann Barber (This was also the 1996 Media Natcon)

Basicon 2, Melbourne September 1997 (This was also the 1997 Media Natcon) YWCA Conference Centre Chairs Ian Gunn & Karen Pender-Gunn

Thyiacon 2 Hobart June 1998 Hadley's Hotel, Hobart GoHs: George RR Martin, Leanne Frahm Honoured Guests: Neil Gaiman, Sara Douglass [Virtual Guest (O.C.P): J Michael Straczynski] Chairs: Robin Johnson & Cary Lenehan

Spawncon Two Melbourne September 1999 Melbourne Convention Centre, held as part of Aussiecon Three. No GoH. Convention Muggins: Marc Ortleib

Swancon 25 Perth April, 2000. Ascot Inn, Belmont, WA. GsoH Connie Willis and Ian Nichols. Gratuitous interstate guest "Mitch" Other guests include Stephen Dedman, Sue Isle, Jack Dann, Janeen Webb, Sean Williams and Tess Williams

Swancon 2001 Perth April 2001. GsoH Robert Silverberg, Karen Haber, Rosaleen Love, Marilyn Pride, Lewis Morley, Kate Orman and Sue Ackerman The Rydges Hotel Perth

42nd Australian National SF Convention - Convergence Melbourne June 2002 GsoH Joe Haldeman, Sean Williams, Lucy Sussex, Gay Haldeman and Race Mathews Toastmaster Jack Dann Cato Conference Centre Melbourne. Chair Rose Mitchell

Swancon 2003 Perth, April 2003. GsoH: Lynn Flewelling, Tony Shillitoé, Fiona McIntosh, FGOH Justin Ackroyd. Chair: Jason Watson

*Information courtesy of Marc Ortleib,
Dave Cake & Emma Hawkes*

Canberra Fan History



Canberra fandom had its "official" start on the 8th November 1953 with the formation of the Futurian Society of Canberra. Over Easter 1956 the Society hosted a gathering of fans from Sydney and Melbourne. In 1971 Leigh Hyde established the Canberra Science Fiction Society Inc.(CSFS) and served as the club's first President.

From 1973 Nikki White hosted several Star Trek dinners and other events, including a party for the 15th Anniversary of Dr Who. In December 1979 she released the first issue of the media fanzine Multiverse. In 1976, Bob Ellis started a Dungeons and Dragons Group. It has been said that some members continued to an involvement in CANCON, the highly successful gaming convention held every Australia Day holiday weekend in Canberra. The CSFS hosted their first Convention 'Circulation 1' in October 1981. The convention was held at the Ainslie Hotel with 'mascot' Peter Toluzzi and received good reviews.

The following year at Easter Jocelyn Munro hosted a Battlestar Galactica party and started a fanzine The Galactican. In August 1982 Nikki White commenced production of a Blake's 7 APAzine Centro. This has since evolved into an excellent multi-media SF discussion APAzine and is still in production. In November 1982 the CSFS hosted 'Circulation II', at Ainslie Hotel with 'mascot' Karen Warnock. In December the following year they hosted a pleasantly relaxed 'Circulation III' at the Southside Caravan Park, with 'mascot' Kim Huett.

In 1983 Chris Bayliss started an Australian branch of the Dr Who International Fan Club (DWIFC). Another Canberra Dr Who based club started in 1985 was named INIT, a tribute (?) to UNIT. INIT was eventually revealed as an acronym for Insane National Idiots Taskforce.

In 1985 Mark Stonham started The System Blake's 7 Fan Club. In 1986 Valma Brown and Leigh Edmunds produced a SF news and discussion fanzine The Notional. They continued to produce this monthly for some time after they moved to Perth in 1988. The DWIFC local group hosted a general science fiction relaxacon. This event was Narrelle Harris' formal farewell to Canberra fandom. She left shortly afterwards for Perth.

The BIG event of 1987 was CAPCON '87, the 26th National SF Convention in April. Held at the Canberra Park Royal Hotel, the theme was "A Forum for Tomorrow". Guests of Honour were Robert Asprin and Lyn Abbey, with Fan Guest of Honour John Newman.

In March 1987, the DWIFC local group held a "minicon" in the Griffin Centre (as a final event) and entered the Canberra Festival parade in a variety of costumes. Several fans formed a new club SF MAD coordinated by Katrina Weeden. In the meantime a new Dr Who Club The Dr Who Enthusiasts started operation in 1988.

SF MAD continued the tradition of an SF entry in the March 1988 Canberra Festival Parade with a Star Wars group theme. The entry appeared that evening on the local television news, and for several years afterwards in Parade TV advertisements. SF MAD continued to enter the Parade for several years, accompanied by Daleks built by local fans Andrew Wynberg and Stephen Bennett. Even after SF MAD

ceased, Andrew and Stephen continued to enter the Daleks. They were a popular feature of the Parade.

In 1989 the Australian National University Library hosted a display of rare Science Fiction books. Gaslight Books, owned by Gayle and Robert Lovett, opened in Fyshwick. It continues to be the only SF and Mystery new and second hand specialist book store in Canberra. Mark Juddery released a new fanzine Vertical Hold: The Magazine of Cult Television in Spring 1989, while David Tansey started the Esoteric Order of Dagon Inc. and a fanzine of the same name in 1989.

Two conventions were held in 1989. CONSPIRE in March was the Australasian SF Media Convention and the sixth National SCOT Dr Who Convention. The theme of the Convention was "Mystery", with many attending participating in a weekend 'murder mystery'. The CSFS hosted "Circulation 4" (The 4th Canberra Regional SF Convention) in September at Eagle Hawk Motel, with the theme "Who took the Science out of Science Fiction". The mascot for this event was Jean Weber, always a welcome Canberra resident and visitor.

In 1990, the Canberra Science Fiction Society produced their first anthology Singularities, edited by Garry Wyatt. In May of 1990 a local group for the Australian Friends of Pern Club commenced with a Gather at the Downer Shops.

The ACT Region SF Fund was started in 1991, mainly to promote the local Science Fiction groups. The Fund sponsored a promotional stall at the Canberra ACT Alive Festival and the inaugural ACT Region SF Awards. The Awards were presented at the CSFS December convention 'Circulation 5.5' (Most Popular Canberra SF Fan Artist – Widya Santoso, Author – Karen Herkes, and Fanzine – SF MAD's The Capitol edited by Katrina Weeden). 'Circulation 5.5' was held at the Australian National University with mascot Widya Santoso.

SF MAD held several events in 1991: a "Gather" in Queanbeyan in May, a trip to Berrima in August, and a 25th Anniversary Star Trek celebration in September. SF MAD Coordinator Katrina Weeden and Sue Lake-Harris also produced a one-off Robin of Sherwood fanzine that year called Nothing is Forgotten.

Three new clubs started in 1991. A local group of the Australasian Dr Who Fan Club (the "Canberran Dr Who Fan Club") commenced in January, with Huw Buchtman as the first 'president'. Then Ethan West started NEXT GEN, a local Star Trek Fan Club. Finally Karen Herkes started the Australian National University Science Fiction Club. ANU students formed another on-campus SF and Fantasy Club the following year named the The Inklings.

Actor Dave Prowse visited Canberra in 1991 to promote his charity "The Force against Arthritis" and meet with local SF Fans. The event was very successful and featured in the following day's Canberra Times.

Canberra Fan History Cont d

The 1992-year's ending was celebrated with Star Trek: The Next Convention. Despite the name, this was a multi-media SF convention held at the Australian National University, and hosted by the ANU SF Club. Special Guests were Lewis Morley and Marilyn Pride, George Ivanoff, and Rob Herzog. The ACT Region Science Fiction Awards were also presented at this Convention (Most Popular Fan Artist – Widya Santoso, Author – Nikki White, and Fanzine – NEXTGEN's Locutus).

1994 was the last year for SF MAD. Another club opened Omni, coordinated by April Herzog, to provide a multi-media science fiction focus. But by 1996, for various reasons Omni, the Canberran Dr Who Fan Club and the ANU SF Club closed. 1994 was also the last year the ACT Region SF Awards were held (although money is held in trust for possible resurrection). The Award Dinner was held in the National Press Club in December of that year (Most Popular Fan Artist -Alex de Vos, Author - Nikki White, and Fanzine - Nikki White's Centro and NEXTGEN's Locutus tied).

By 1995 the ANU SF Club and NEXT GEN were basically the same crowd, so the two clubs amalgamated to form the NEXT GEN: The ANU Science Fiction Society. The newly formed club hosted an "Evening with Richard Arnold" in October 1997.

An Aussiecon III promotional Christmas party a.k.a. "Attack of the Pre-World SF Convention Canberra Christmas Party" was held at Calwell in 1998. The Inaugural World Science Fiction Celebrity Heads Competition was held, with Christine Hawkins declared World Champion. This prestigious event has not been held since, so Christine is still the reigning champion.

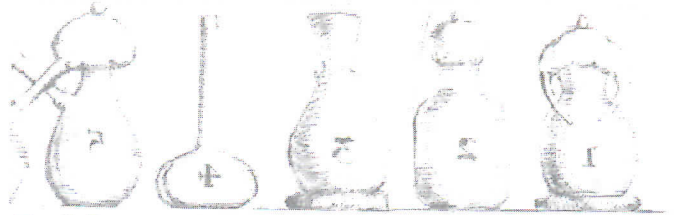
In 1999 local author Maxine McArthur won the George Turner Award for her novel Time Future. Maxine went on to form The Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild with Les Petersen after Aussiecon III. In the same year Susan Batho donated a large collection of Australian fanzines to the National Library of Australia. The material formed a special display in the National Library of Australia Visitor Centre during February and March. Susan Batho also spoke on the topic of "Fanzines and Final Frontiers" at the Library in February.

A new Australasian Dr Who Fan Club local group was formed, with an email discussion group and occasional meetings. NEXT GEN: The ANU Science Fiction Society morphed into REGEN: The ANU Cult Media Society to reflect it's general multi-media interests.

In April 2001 the ACT Writers Centre held a "Speculative Fiction" Month. Jack Dann presented a writer's workshop for the event and launched the Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild's new Anthology Nor of Human (edited by Geoffrey Maloney).

The newly formed "Canberra SF Committee" held their inaugural Canberra Science Fiction Convention at the Canberra Museum and Gallery in May 2001, with the theme "Science in collusion with Fiction". Local author Kaaren Sutcliffe launched the Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild's second anthology Machinations: An Anthology of Ingenious Designs (edited by Chris Andrews) in August 2002.

The 'Canberra Science Fiction Committee' held their second Canberra SF Convention "Canberra SF Con 2002" in May at the Novotel in Canberra City. Guests included Sean McMullen, Catherine McMullen, Ian Irvine and many others.



Trudi Canavan launched The Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild's third anthology, Elsewhere: an Anthology of Incredible Places (edited by Michael Barry), at the National Library of Australia in October 2003. In 2003 Art Sound FM 92.7 started SPECULATION, a monthly radio program that features "SF, Fantasy, Magickal Realism and Horror..."

Fans of the US Science Fiction television series Star Gate SG1 were pleased to have the professional group Best of Both Worlds stage one of their conventions in Canberra in 2002. The group has since hosted a multi-media science fiction convention and Lord of the Rings Films Conventions.

Of course we have much to look forward to in 2004: this Convention and an opportunity to welcome new and old friends, and the Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild's new anthology. Enjoy!

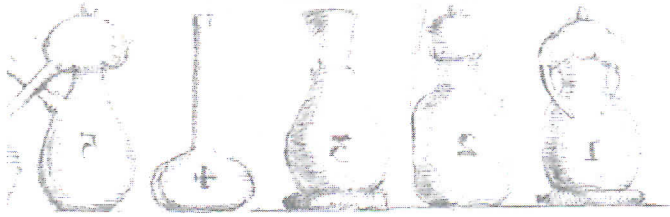
Karen Herkes

Karen Herkes was born in Parramatta, NSW, but grew up in Queensland, where she and a friend edited a "crudzine" of stunning mediocrity, Hyperspace. She enlisted in the Army in 1981 and coincidentally started to attend a number of science fiction conventions. She moved to Canberra in 1983 and became involved in local SF fan clubs (both general and media). She wrote a lot, edited a few local fanzines, helped with a few conventions, served on some Club committees, and generally enjoyed good company! After graduating from University, she now works as a psychologist, and is married with a rapidly expanding family. She still writes a lot of short stories, most of which she's not game to show anyone, is collecting local ghost stories and has an ever-expanding book that she hopes will be published one day. Karen is also involved in a small group responsible for the website act-sf.8m.com, a comprehensive guide and historical record of Canberra Fandom – a work-in-progress. She also writes murder mysteries for parties – she's done several for charities and a couple of private affairs. Oh, and one for the 1989 SF Media Natcon, Conspire, held in Canberra. There were 197 players - what a challenge, but so much fun! More information about Karen can be found here:

<http://act-sf.8m.com/index.html>



Theatre Stream



Report by Co-ordinator,
Richard Womack

The idea of Theatre Stream was one of the exciting inclusions in the Canberra bid for the 2004 National Conference. As soon as Conflux was born, so Theatre Stream started, because of the need for national publicity and the long lead-time for the creation and production of plays.

The advertising and collection of entries for consideration at Conflux began in late 2002, and 39 original works were submitted representing all states and territories before the deadline of May 2003.

It was the opinion of all the judges that the plays submitted were generally of a very high standard and genuinely diverse in content and approach and that the competition for the initial selection was fierce, but they unanimously agreed on the following plays.

The tyrannies of time then became apparent, because many of the directors who had committed to produce these plays, one year later, were unable to do so. At the time of going to press, we are still negotiating with local drama groups and hope to be able to add to the production list.

Conflux is proud to announce (in alphabetical order) that the following plays were short listed for potential production and circulated to directors.

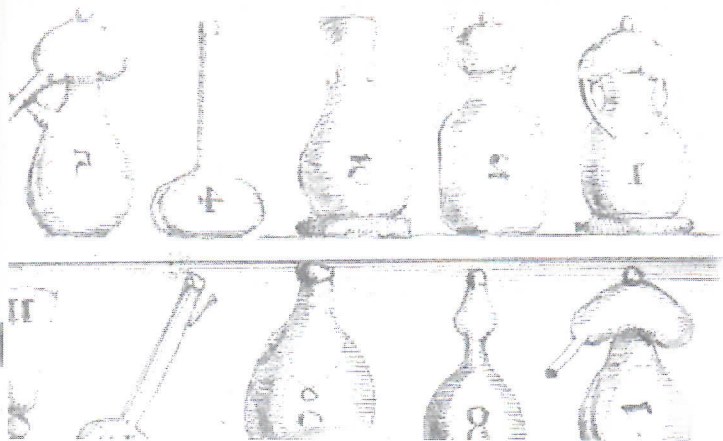
Death by Finger Bun	Julia Lewis
Down Sugar	Fiona Benson
Empire of Zolon	Sue Murray
Space Conquest 261	Edward Burger
That's That Then	B. W. Shearer
The Devil You Know	Garry Fay
Times Variable	Robert Luxford
You, Me and Pumpkin Soup	Robert Jenkins
Contact	Richard Womack

The Devil You Know and Times Variable are into production, being directed by Nick Johnson.



©Ellie Clarke

Waiting for



An academic then referred to the field as "waiting for its Shakespeare"—that is, for a towering figure who could take the form to its heights, never to be equaled. The Bard came upon the Elizabethan stage and drama has never been the same since. Strikingly, he came early in the history of modern drama, though the Greeks had been staging great plays nearly two millennia before, and wrenched the form around until it accommodated the sensibilities of a quite different culture.

Other critics such as Brian Aldiss, particularly in his *Billion Year Spree* (later updated to *Trillion*), argued that H.G. Wells may have been the founder of modern SF and its Shakespeare all in one. Jules Verne came before, and in his attention to detail and plausibility may be said to be the founder of hard SF, but Verne mostly stuck to adventure stories, not heart-strumming dramas, "real novels." Verne was not broad enough.

Wells indeed did lay down many of the great idea-novels of the genre (though it wasn't a genre then), principally in his first decade: *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*. When has any writer had such a run, such a gusher of creation? Of course there were antecedents to many of his ideas. But he brought them to full, heartfelt dimension with true dramatic clout—and often, in novels that we would term novellas today, marvels of compression. This he had in common with Shakespeare, who came to the young English stage and made it grow up.

But the New Wave advocates felt that truly adult SF would come only after the methods and crafts of mainstream literary styles were imported to bring to fruition SF's themes. And Tom Disch did produce *Camp Concentration*, Joanna Russ *And Chaos Died*, Samuel Delany both *Nova* and *Dahlgren*, Roger Zelazny *This Immortal*, Harlan Ellison in groundbreaking short stories, while Brian Aldiss, Michael Moorcock and J.G. Ballard had their peaks as well. Sadly, most of these works are long out of print, perhaps to be revived in a zombie-like way by on-demand publishing, which will cater to small audiences wishing to catch up on some of the fine works of the last half century.

But Shakespeare? None of these authors became the commanding figure Wm. S. was in his age. (Or may have been. There is curiously little documentation of Shakespeare the man—no letters, occasional pieces, not a single original manuscript. This has led some to suppose that Edward Devere in fact wrote the works, with the actor Shakespeare as a useful front. This leads to a wholly different reading of the plays and sonnets—an intriguing possibility, reminding us that even great figures can carry with them an artful ambiguity, to this day.)

How come? Perhaps because no one can command the range of science, fiction and worldly knowledge demanded of a great novelist now. That may be why we have no looming figures of Tolstoy's scale. Science fiction, which takes on the largest issues confronting the human heart and head, demands much more than a conventional novelist needs to muster.

Maybe it's impossible to become the Shakespeare of SF any longer? Or...could we somehow have missed him? (Or her?!)

I've seen a heady rush sweep through the field as new, powerful writers arrived, at times greeted with hosannas that suggested the arrival of *The Master*. Ursula LeGuin's early *Ace*

novels led to a remarkable string: *The Left Hand of Darkness*, *The Lathe of Heaven*, *The Dispossessed*, and on into some fine work. The first edition of the Nicholls & Clute SF Encyclopedia pronounced her the best living SF writer. But while her acceptance by the mainstream is unparalleled in SF by any other than Clarke, her highly successful career since has not been of Shakespearean dimension. Perhaps this will later seem just a change in fashion, for LeGuin wrote primarily "social SF" that resonated with the questioning of fundamentals going on in the advanced nations in the 1960s and 1970s. When society re-inspects itself again, her reputation may benefit. To me, *The Dispossessed* is the best consideration of the nature of utopia literature has yet produced—and it has a scientist as its central figure.

The second edition of the SF Encyclopedia made a case for Gene Wolfe as the greatest living SF author. Admittedly, their case seemed a bit half-hearted, and they made no such case for LeGuin (fickle critics!). I like his work, he may be our best stylist—but I doubt he's our Bard, for reaching a large audience is surely a signature, and Gene is a cultivated taste.

Similarly, we saw Dan Simmons heralded by some as a writer who knew his science (not from experience; he got it from reading, just as the Bard apparently got his knowledge of, say, Italy) and had a flair for novels. He found a large audience, too. Greg Bear fit that description as well, and has produced fine work. Joe Haldeman we greeted in the mid-1970s in the backwash of the New Wave, and for a while held the record for the highest advance paid for an SF novel (\$50,000—it seemed huge, then). Joe probably never thought of Shakespeare; Hemingway is his literary idol. William Gibson made a big splash in 1984 with a polished, insightful style that unhinged an aspect of techno-culture we had little glimpsed before. Further, he rode the wave created by the films *Blade Runner* (noir future) and *Tron* (virtual reality dramas, jacking in). But cyberpunk was, like social SF, a passing taste—still powerful, but not a revolution in the sense that John Campbell's first team wrought one in that distant first Golden Age.

So it seems no recent arrival is the Bard in disguise.

Consider a smaller question, then: who is the reigning figure, still alive, in modern SF? My money would be on two old favorites, Arthur Clarke and Ray Bradbury. Clarke gave us 2001 and Bradbury *The Martian Chronicles*, works that will live a very long while indeed. Bradbury says he's not an SF writer, but he clearly came out of the magazines that termed themselves that.

But is either our Shakespeare? Somehow I doubt that either has the range to deserve the label. Of the two, Clarke comes closest, for my money. His amusing essays and *Tales from the White Hart* show his comic side, while many stories and novels display his grasp of the largest scales available to the modern intellect.

It is worth pondering who we will have to fill their shoes. Among living American SF writers, Fred Pohl and Robert Silverberg probably have spanned the greatest range, summoned up deep emotions and plumbed the reaches of many ideas. But neither of these fine gentlemen would pretend to be a Shakespeare comparable to Wells.

Shakespeare?

Gregory Benford

When I began writing science fiction, as a graduate student in 1964, it was commonplace to regard the SF field as just entering its great phase. Of course there had been the Golden Age of 1939-45, and arguably a Silver Age of the early 1950s...but 1964 was rife with the hubbub of the early New Wave, remember, and promise seemed to brim everywhere.

And maybe there's a reason for that.

SF has become the preeminent genre, emerging from lowly pulp origins to rule the visual media. Alas, it is still a stepped-upon subsection of the lit'ry world, excluded from serious consideration, relegated to a box in the back at the New York Times Book Review.

But the written forms feed the visual ones, as many authors (like me) who have had their work purloined by screenwriters have woefully found. So we are influential, if not rich or famous. So here's an audacious thought: maybe our Shakespeare was Stanley Kubrick.

After all, in a stunning series he gave us in a mere few years Dr. Strangelove, 2001, A Clockwork Orange - all near-future works of genius, derived from novels, two of them acknowledged as SF. They showed us worlds nobody had yet visited, and made his name. When Kubrick died, he was going to resume work on a film about artificial intelligence, on which he had already lavished years of script labour, working in turn with Brian Aldiss, Bob Shaw and Ian Watson. There was a flurry of speculation that Stephen Spielberg was going to take up the project, and work proceeds apace.

It's startling to entertain the notion of Kubrick as our Shakespeare—but remember, the Bard primarily wrote for a visual medium, too. And in keeping with our station in life, nobody in the general culture thinks of Kubrick as a science fiction person at all.

Still...there is a deeper problem here, rummaging around for a science fictional Shakespeare. We are the genre, the inventor of fandom itself, fanzines, big fan conventions, a fount of cultural innovation. But rather than see ourselves as a partitioned piece of literature, better to say that we are a continuing conversation.

No other genre refers back so far and so often to its Golden Age(s), citing works and comparing writers—just as this column has done. In weeding out the new but derivative, by holding it up to the light of other days, we confer Grand Master status only upon those who truly extend our mental frontiers, and relegate those who merely rearrange conceptual deck chairs to the lesser ranks (where, these days, they get stuck writing franchise fiction and work-for-hire media tie-ins, just to make ends meet.)

We inspect ideas anew in ways other genres do not. Where in mysteries, say, does one see a gang of young Turks write a three-novel sequence to re-imagine a classic work? Yet that's what I did with Greg Bear and David Brin, when we wrote the Second Foundation Trilogy. Isaac Asimov's grand ideas rewarded revisiting, we thought, seen through the eyes of another generation. Of course, some Asimov fans thought this was overtly a bad idea. We expected that, along with the hard core of fans who do not want their view of the sacred texts challenged. All this is part of the debate, too.

Most generally, our field comprises a way for the general culture to see itself in a fresh light. Science particularly has always used SF to think about the implications of its

own work. That's why so many scientists have written SF (again, like me—a phenomenon you can study further in some essays at my website, available through authorcafe.com).

Rather than look upon our great works as resembling classical symphonies, to be played in grand halls to a passive audience, think of us as a jazz band—swinging down Basin Street in full voice, blaring our messages, running new riffs on old standards, fresh melodic lines, improvisation as the blood and rhythm of the enterprise itself. Our band's sign might well read, JAZZ, THAT'S WHAT WE ARE -- because it's what we truly do well.

And New Orleans never needed a Shakespeare.

****This piece first appeared in Steam Engine Time #3, December 2001.**

Guest of Honour: Greg Benford:

Gregory Benford born in 1941, is a professor of Plasma Physics and Astrophysics teaching at the University of California, Irvine since 1971 and author to well over a hundred papers in the fields of physics, condensed matter, particle physics, plasmas and mathematical physics as well as biological conservation. Benford is also the author of over dozen novels, including *Jupiter Project*, *Artifact*, *Against Infinity*, *Great Sky River*, and *Timescape*. A two-time winner of the Nebula Award, he has also won the John W. Campbell Award, the Ditmar Award, the 1995 Lord Foundation Award for achievement in the sciences, and the 1990 United Nations Medal in Literature.

His television credits, in addition to the series *A Galactic Odyssey* (an eight part series, which described modern physics and astronomy from the perspective of the evolution of the galaxy. It was produced for an international audience by Japan National Broadcasting, and Benford acted as host and scriptwriter for the series), include *2000*. He has served as scientific consultant to the NHK Network and for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

For more information supplied by the man himself:

<http://www.GregoryBenford.com/>

For information about his scientific endeavours:

<http://www.ps.uci.edu/physics/benford.html>

For a comprehensive listing of his published works:

http://isfdb.tamu.edu/cgi-bin/ea.cgi?Gregory_Benford



An Interview

S: Congratulations, Robert, for being the first person ever to call me sophisticated.

R: Voyage of the Shadowmoon is an extraordinary achievement, and it ranks among the best international fantasy that I've read. Your fantasy reads like SF, and your SF reads like fantasy. How did this come about?

S: I have a strong technical background, and I work in computing, but I'm also doing a PhD in medieval fantasy, I've fought in medieval re-enactment groups, and I do fencing and karate. I like fantasy but I ended up writing SF first. Eventually I decided to have a bit of a treat and write fantasy for a while ... and I never quite stopped.

R: With Shadowmoon, are we talking trilogy?

S: I have two books written, one in progress, and two more planned. That comes to five. They are fun to write, and have been generating more fan mail than the entire Greatwinter trilogy.

R: Greatwinter is, of course, Souls in the Great Machine, The Miocene Arrow, and Eyes of the Calculator. In many ways it is our Foundation trilogy. Voyage is different. It's comedy which is also intelligent, keen-eyed observation of the absurdities of life.

S: I've noticed that in quite dramatic, even dangerous situations, people start joking. I was in the air in a United Airlines plane during the 9/11 attacks, and while we were all in a rather distraught state, people made gallows humour-style jokes to try to cope. I have a problem with serious writers who write serious stories about serious situations where everything's always grim and serious. That's not reality...

R: I was reading Voyage on the train and it more than passed my chuckle test: I got twenty hearty chuckles out of ten pages. There's a lot of emphasis on structured learning in your novels, which obviously comes from your academic career, but you don't advocate otherworldly scholarship. If my schooling had provided as many opportunities for horizontal education as your stories, I would have paid a lot more attention.

S: I went through university working and studying part time – so I always had the contrast of everyday life and student culture. That influenced my writing quite strongly. I also noticed that many students from strict schools really cut loose at uni – girls singing bawdy songs in parties and getting quite drunk, guys doing rather gross things.

R: We hasten to add that Sean was a detached observer.

S: I shall reserve comment.

R: Women are allowed to be chivalrous too in your universe. There's a lot of wenching in your universe, but also – what's the female equivalent of wenching?

S: Churling?

R: Anyway, equal opportunity for everybody. Did you set out to be a chivalrous champion of feminism?

S: It's the company I keep. I've taught to women for decades, and the majority of women I deal with both in martial arts and professionally tend to be strong and forthright of personality.

R: The planetary system that Voyage take place in is complicated. Did you work out all the orbital positionings?

S: Oh yes, I like everything exact. I calculated the orbital dynamics, and it's a scaled-up Jupiter system. The Moonworlds orbit within the Lordworld's huge magnetic field. They're bathed in strong electromagnetic fields, plasma and radiation, the life forms have evolved to cope with that. And the characters use these energies for the magical castings – mentally controlled images in plasma.

R: So there's a scientific justification?

S: Yes, but keep your voice down.

R: I like the vampire Laron. He's been 14 years old for 700 years, he has a name for every pimple on his face, and all he really wants to do is go on a date. To quote

with Sean McMullen

R: Sean McMullen has proven himself one of Australia's most sophisticatedly adept SF writers with his *Greatwinter* series, and has aced the other end of the genre with his superb fantasy novels *The Centurion's Empire*, and *Voyage of the Shadowmoon*. Congratulations Sean, you're the only Australian author I've interviewed in nine years of *Zero-G* who has rung the bell so clearly and loudly at both ends of the spectrum.

him: 'I also have the body of a 14 year old, pimply, pigeon-chested wanker, and after seven centuries I'm getting mightily sick of it.' The 14-year-old, virgin vampire, that's unique.

S: All my own work, I'd never heard of Buffy when I first had the idea. Many of my readers are teenagers, and they identify strongly with all that. Like Laron, they want to be taken seriously. He even glues a beard on to try to look older.

R: Just to finish up, an easy grab for people who don't know your writing is to think of Terry Pratchett – only not funny continuously – mixed with Bernard Cornwall, and George MacDonald Fraser.

S: Interesting. I discovered Pratchett and Cornwall quite late, so that what I liked best in their writing was already in my style. Parallel evolution, perhaps.

R: We have been talking to Sean McMullen, author of the *Greatwinter* and *Moonworlds* novels.

An edited interview with Sean McMullen by Robert Jan on Radio RRR FM's Zero-G, 9th September 2003 (102.7 MHz, audio streaming at www.rrr.org.au)

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(Whodathunk!)

*Sean McMullen is one Australia's leading SF and fantasy authors. He is the winner of a dozen awards for SF and fantasy. He works in scientific computing, and is currently doing a PhD in Medieval Fantasy Literature at Melbourne University. In non-fiction, Sean was a co-author of *Strange Constellations*, *History of Australian SF*, and has written dozens of articles on SF and fantasy. He has given innumerable talks and presentations on the genre to forums ranging from SF conventions to national television.*



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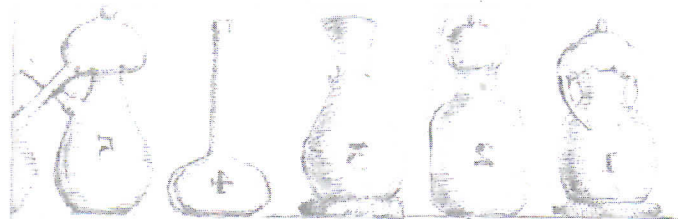
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Master of Ceremonies

by Debra Biancotti

Nick Stathopoulos is best known as a highly sought-after cover artist. His work has graced books by such celebrated authors as Terry Dowling, Jack Dann, John Marsden and Ian Irvine. In 1999 he was nominated for a Hugo Award for Best Professional Art. That same year, his cover for *Dreaming Down Under* was nominated for a British SF Association Award. In 2003, Nick's portrait of Mr Squiggle (with creator Norman Hetherington) was a finalist for the Archibald Prize.



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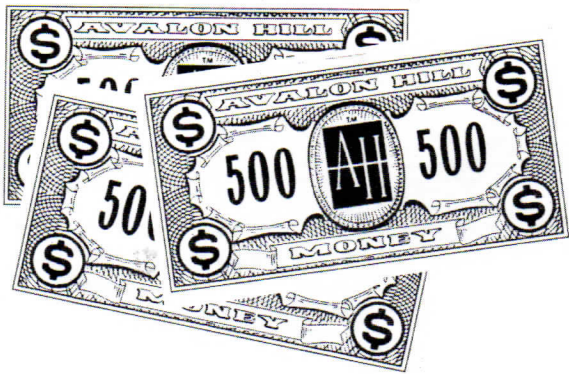
At high school, Nick had teachers lining up to be caricatured for the school newspaper. He was 14 when his first SF illustration appeared in print: for the journal *Enigma*, the magazine of the Sydney University Science Fiction Club. He completed his first professional cover while studying Law at Sydney University.

Since then, Nick has worked in film, television, theatre, and gaming. His art direction for the SBS TV special *Son of Romeo* won a Penguin Television Award in 1990. He has also worked on production design, storyboards, prop creation, and puppetry. He's created matte paintings for Alex Proyas (of *Dark City* fame), among others, and freelanced for both Hanna Barbera and Disney, creating animation backgrounds. Nick has worked with sculpture, latex masquerade masks, models, puppets and special effects.

When he has a spare moment, Nick writes science fiction, and composes his own music. He has also developed his own feature film scripts.

A regular in the Australian SF&F Scene, Nick is an avid collector of SF movie posters, art books, model kits, original Anime cels, and *Godzilla* memorabilia. He has been an aficionado on the history of the *Titanic* since he was a boy -- which led to a job offer on the James Cameron film.

Nick holds a BA and an LLB, and has used his expertise to serve as legal advisor for the *Illustrator's Association of Australia*. He is also a past president of the association, and continues to work for artist's rights. He is regarded throughout the community as a generous teacher and an enthusiastic champion of all creative arts.



Rail Baron:

This short explanation of Rail Baron, a board game that is regularly played at Natcons, is for the benefit of anyone who come across a board game during Conflux featuring a map of the United States of America, large numbers of railways, three die (two white, one red) and a remarkably courteous group of keenly engaged contestants. In summary, despite the previously unreported and allegedly controversial history of Rail Baron at Natcons, its popularity can be explained by the interstate migration

of a small group of Western Australian fans between 1985 and 1995. Those fans are reluctant to entirely give up an enjoyable pastime even though they recognise that the harsh rules of the once regular Monday night Rail Baron game cannot be strictly enforced in the foppish environment of a modern Natcon. Foolish and continuing attempts by fans of more easterly origins, best described as both deluded and delusional creatures, to challenge the unquestioned dominance of Western Australian fans at Rail Baron are helping to spread the Rail Baron meme throughout the nation.

For those wondering, the strict rules of the once regular Monday night Rail Baron game were as follows:

Rule #1 Each attendee must bring a 750 ml bottle of red wine.

Rule #1(a) Attendees named or otherwise known as David Lockett must also bring a 750 ml bottle of single malt whiskey. This rule also applied to attendees named or otherwise known as Dave Lockett.

Rule #1(b) Each attendee must drink the entire contents of at least one bottle of red wine and an equitable share of the single malt whiskey.

Rule #2 Each attendee must behave at all times with gentlemanly demeanour and show the utmost respect to his or her opponents.

Rule #2(a) Swearing, cursing, violent gesticulation, shouts of rage and unsubstantiated allegations about parentage and sexual preferences are highly regarded as signs of gentlemanly demeanour and indications of utmost respect towards opponents.

Rule #2(b) In keeping with the then fashionable views of Margaret Thatcher about the fallacy of society and primacy of individual interests, all and any forms of alliances or co-operative behaviour between attendees were strictly discouraged with the exception of the ritual taunting and humiliation of attendees named or otherwise known as Ian Nichols.

Rule #3 The form and spirit of Rail Baron were inviolate and all rules and conventions were to be adhered to, both in their letter and in their spirit.

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EXPOSED

*Explained by
Mark Loney*



Rule #3(a) Attendees named or otherwise known as Julian Warner were permitted to spill red wine on the playing board and to demonstrate the British propensity towards toilet humour by way of using a ball point pen to make minor and allegedly humorous alterations to the names of certain American cities.

Rule #3(b) Networks were allowed. Declarations were made once an attendee accumulated \$150,000 in cash. 4 player games were good. 5 player games were better. 6 player games were challenging. The 30 second rule was strictly enforced.

Sadly, the once regular Monday night Rail Baron game came to an end in the second half of the eighties with a slow trickle of Western Australian fans to the Rail Baron free eastern states. Mark Loney (and co-host games night host Michelle Muijsert) moved to Melbourne in 1986. Julian Warner and Seth Lockwood also trekked east to Melbourne in the eighties but Greg Turkich waited until



Circa 1985: Ian Nichols, Julian Warner & Dave Luckett

the nineties before heading for Canberra.

Monday night stalwarts such as Ian "Eddie Baby" Edwards, Ian "Nico" Nichols, David "Dave" Luckett and Sally "Nickname" Beasley still guard the sacred paraphernalia in shrines widely dispersed across the Perth metropolitan area. Despite this, Natcons are one of the few times when we all find ourselves in the same place with a Rail Baron set in the vicinity. The artifice of the Rail Baron tournament is simply intended to provide us with as many opportunities as possible to enjoy the roll of the dice and the pleasure of owning a popular lockout, panels and other Natcon commitments notwithstanding.

I have no idea how we drank that much alcohol for so many Monday nights and got home safely afterwards. Actually, I know how I did it because most of the Monday night games were at my place and all I had to do was make it to the bedroom - I just have no idea how anyone else got home safely. But it is nice to catch up at Natcons with the swearing, the cursing, the violent gesticulations, the shouts of rage and the unsubstantiated allegations about the parentage and sexual preferences of my highly esteemed and very reputable opponents.



Circa 1985: Dave Luckett & Mark Loney

Conflux Art Show

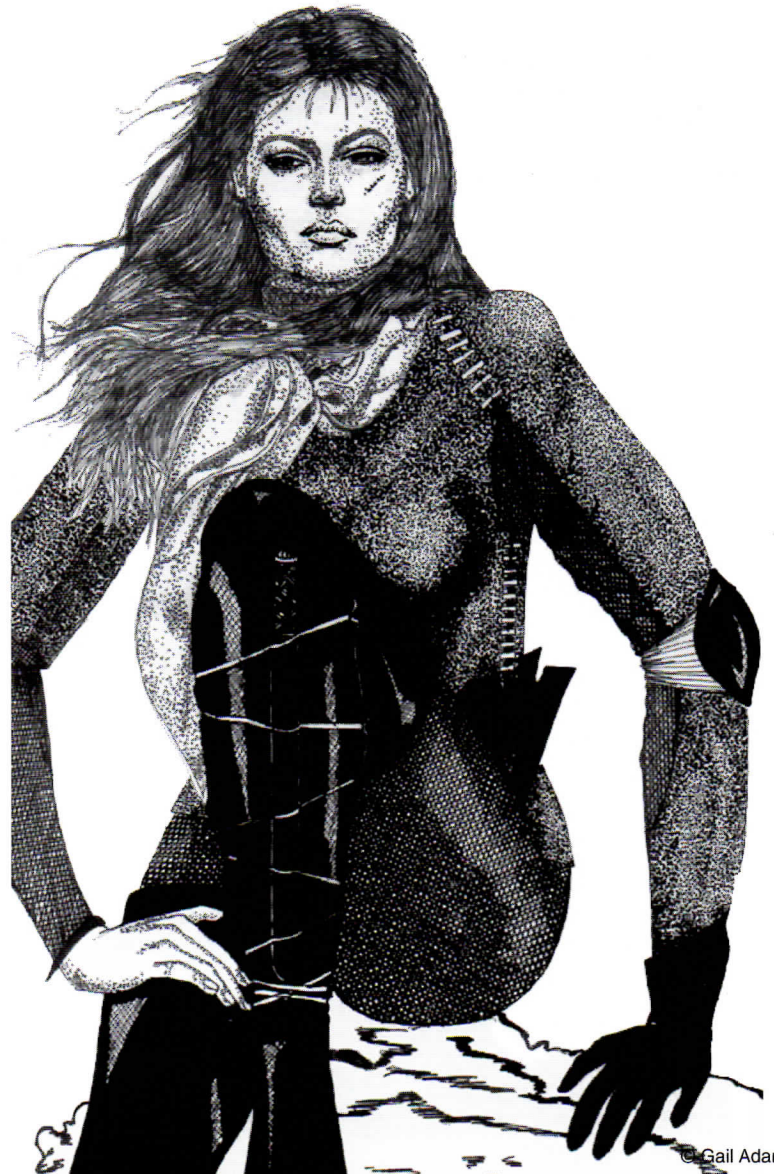


Conflux will be hosting an art show with three prestigious judges and some top of the range prizes. Bob Eggleton, (Hugo Award winning artist,) Trudi Canavan, (Art Director, Aurealis Magazine and freelance illustrator) and Nick Stathopoulos, highly acclaimed artist and illustrator, line up to judge either professional or amateur (if sufficient artwork is received) art categories.

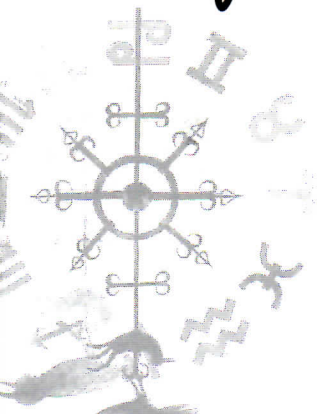
Art Director Les Petersen, illustrator, artist and writer, along with helpers, Lily Chrywenstrom, Editor Fables and Reflections, Shane Parker, illustrator, Taamati Hanson-Pou, 3D animator and Ella McCay, art enthusiast are co-ordinating the presentation of art show participants work.

Conflux is also showing artwork by Nick Stathopoulos as part of the display and the art show team will be putting together some sessions for artists to talk about their work during the convention. These special sessions will be advertised in the art show room during the convention.

The Academy of Interactive Entertainment has donated a 3-4 day short course on 3D animation. For the amateur artist ASIM have offered publication of the winning work in Issue 16 (Jan/Feb2005) of Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine.



Conflux Short Story Competition



Conflux is happy to be administering an open-themed up to 3000 word short story competition for writers of speculative fiction. We are fortunate to have the services of three judges and a moderating judge.

The judges are:

Trudi Canavan, author of the Black Magician Series published by Harper Collins, is a freelance illustrator and designer, she also works as the designer and Art Director of Aurealis Magazine.

Claire McKenna's short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies here in Australia and overseas. She has been nominated for the Aurealis, Ditmar and George Turner Prize, and winner of the Katherine Suzannah Pritchard and two Natcon short story competitions. Her manuscript was short listed for the Varuna Manuscript Development award for 2004;

Lily Chrywenstrom is the creator of Fables And Reflections, a magazine of Speculative Fiction, Science Fiction, Fantasy and Magic Realism fiction and nonfiction. In 2003 Fables and Reflections won an Australian National SF (Ditmar) Award in the category Best Fanzine.

Robbie Mathews, Chief Editor, Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine will be the moderating judge as the winning story will be published in that magazine.

We are grateful to the Australian Science Fiction Foundation for their prize money of \$300, which has been divided into a first prize of \$200 and a second prize of \$100. The Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild has donated \$50.00 for the third prize.

There will be an additional prize for young writer of \$50 donated by ACT Writers Centre and an additional prize for a 'Writer of Promise' of a \$50 Dymocks book voucher kindly donated by Dymocks Belconnen.

Special thanks to Nicole Murphy for administering the competition.

Supporting

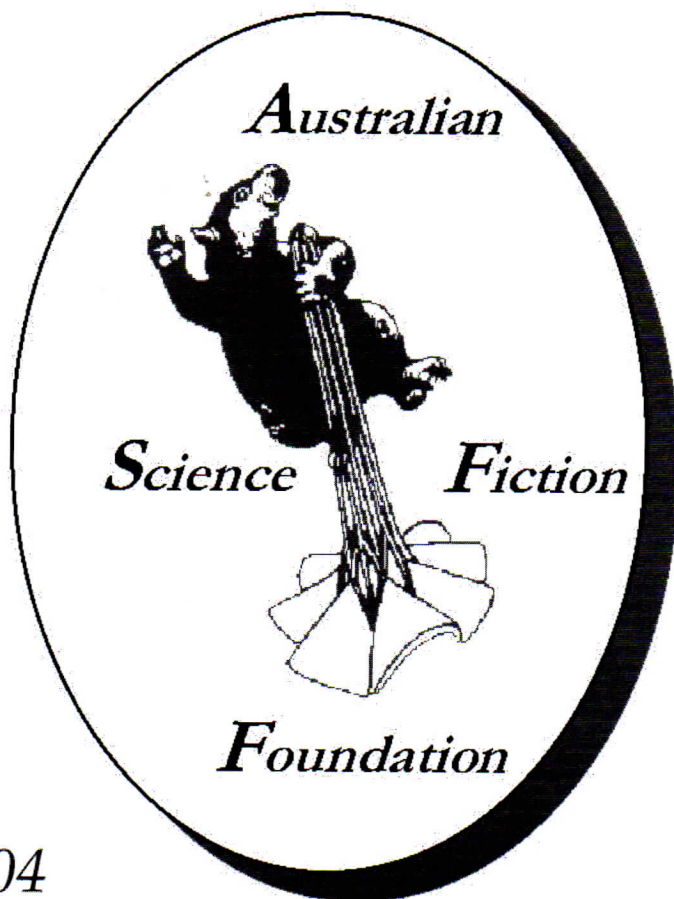
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Notice of the Business Meeting

A Business Meeting will be held at Conflux for the purpose of voting on future bids for holding the Australian National Science Fiction Convention (or 'Natcon') and to consider any business brought before the meeting. Such business may include proposed changes to the rules for running the 'Ditmar' Awards or proposed changes to the Natcon Constitution. The texts of the Ditmar Award rules and the Natcon Constitution are included in this souvenir book.

The Business Meeting will be held at 9.30am on Monday 26 April 2004 in the Lake Geneva room.

The meeting will be chaired by Julian Warner. The Standing Committee of the Natcon will be expected to report on its activities of the past year. The rules for the Standing Committee and other texts related to the running of Natcons may be found at the website at <http://sf.org.au/natconcom/>

It is hoped that any proposed changes to the rules for running the Ditmar Awards or the Natcon Constitution will have been circulated and discussed prior to Conflux - usually on the various internet mailing lists used for discussion of such issues. If you do wish to propose any changes and are unsure of whether these may be considered by the Business Meeting, please contact Julian Warner at the Convention.

Any group wishing to make a presentation at the Business Meeting in order to bid for the forthcoming Natcon (in two years' time) should also contact Julian Warner. Groups bidding for Natcons may also be allocated other opportunities to present their bids at the discretion of the Conflux committee.

Our Business Meeting is scheduled to last one hour and we would like to finalise all of our business within that time. If you have arguments to present to the meeting, please sharpen them well first!

Constitution of the Australian National Science Fiction Convention

- (i) There will be an annual science fiction convention, known as The Australian National Science Fiction Convention and commonly referred to as the Natcon, organized by a Convention Committee selected from amongst bids submitted to the Business Meeting at the Australian National Science Fiction Convention two calendar years before the convention to be selected.
- (ii) The Convention Committee for each Australian National Science Fiction Convention will award the Australian SF (Ditmar) Awards, and certain other awards as detailed in rules made under this constitution. These rules will be amendable by resolution of a Business Meeting and changes will take effect at the next convention.
- (iii) The Convention Committee will ensure that any surplus accrued by the Australian National Science Fiction Convention will be applied to the benefit of Australian fandom generally, and shall not be used to reward individuals or groups connected with the Convention Committee.
- (iv) The Business Meeting of each Australian National Science Fiction Convention will appoint a standing committee to assist the Convention Committee in the administration of certain aspects of the convention which are other than year-to-year, as detailed in rules made under this constitution. These rules will be amendable by resolution of a Business Meeting, and changes will take effect at the next convention.
- (v) This constitution may be changed by this method only: notice of intention to amend, including the exact text, must be submitted to the Convention Committee in sufficient time to be published in the convention handbook (where this constitution and proposed amendment must be published) and then the amendment must be approved by a majority at the Business Meeting.

The Australian Science Fiction Awards, commonly referred to as the Ditmar Awards or Ditmars, recognise excellence by Australians in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror. The Ditmars are a proud tradition that has been continuously maintained by Australian fandom since they were first presented in 1969. The Ditmars are named after Martin James Ditmar (Dick) Jenssen, a founding member of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club. Martin financially supported the awards until about 1975 and is still active in fandom. Each year, the Australian National Science Fiction Convention presents the Ditmar Awards for the previous calendar year.

Conflux is proud to continue this tradition and the Ditmar Awards Ceremony will be a highlight of the Conflux Program.

The Business Meeting of the national convention of the preceding year sets the Ditmar Rules, which govern the administration of the awards. Swancon 2003, the 42nd Australian National Science Fiction Convention that was held in Perth from 17-21 April 2003, established the Rules for the 2004 Ditmar Awards.

Rules for the Australian SF ("Ditmar") Awards

1.0 Preamble

1.1 The Australian SF ("Ditmar") Awards recognise excellence in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror by Australians.

2.0 Categories

2.1 Professional Categories: Best Novel; Best Novella or Novelette; Best Short Story; Best Collected Work; Best Artwork.

2.2 Fan Categories: Best Fan Writer; Best Fan Artist; Best Fan Production; Best Fanzine.

2.3 Special Award for works not eligible in existing categories: Best Professional Achievement; Best Fan Achievement; William Atheling Jr Award for Criticism or Review; Best New Talent.

3.0 Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Timeliness: Works are eligible if they were first published or released anywhere in the world in an edition dated in the calendar year immediately preceding the year the award is held.

3.2 Australianness: Nominees are eligible if they were Australian citizens or permanent residents in the year their nominated work was released.

3.3 Eligibility of committee members: Members of the current Convention Committee will be ineligible for any award, unless the committee appoints a wholly autonomous subcommittee to administer the awards, in which case only the subcommittee will be ineligible.

3.4 Novel: A Novel is any work of sf/f/h of more than 40,000 words.

3.5 Novella or Novelette: A Novella or Novelette is any work of sf/f/h of 7,500 to 40,000 words.

3.6 Short Story: A Short Story is any work of sf/f/h less than 7,500 words.

3.7 Collected Work: A collected work is a sf/f/h collection or anthology, magazine or journal, ezine or webzine which must pay contributors in other than contributor copies and incidentals, or is sponsored by an institution other than a fan club, or the editor/s of which declare the work to be professional. At least one edition of a collected work must have been issued in the eligible calendar year.

3.8 Best Artwork: An artwork is a single work or series of related works of art in any medium other than text.

3.9 Fan Writer and Fan Artist: These awards are made to writers or artists for a work or body of work first published, released, or made available for public viewing in the eligible calendar year. The writer or artist must have received no payment other than contributor copies and other incidentals (coffee mug, t-shirt, poster, etc.)

3.10 Fan Production: This award is for work in any medium first published, released, or made available for public viewing in the eligible calendar year. The author or artist must have received no payment.

3.11 Fanzine: This award is for work in any medium first published, released, or made available for public viewing in the eligible calendar year. The writer or artist must have received no payment. Eligible works include, but are not limited to, a periodical, journal, ezine or webzine

3.12 Special Awards: Special awards recognise outstanding achievements in science fiction fantasy, or horror not eligible in the existing categories.

3.13 The William Atheling Jr Award: The William Atheling Jr Award is for the writing or editing of criticism or review pertaining to the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

3.14 Best New Talent: The Best New Talent award recognises excellence of professional achievement in any field of the genre by an individual who has not been nominated for a professional award three or more years before the year the award is held. An individual is only eligible for two consecutive years.

4.0 Nomination Process

4.1 Eligible nominators and voters: Nominations will be accepted only from natural persons active in fandom, or from full or supporting members of the national convention of the year of the award. Where a nominator may not be known to the Awards subcommittee, the nominator should provide the name of someone known to the subcommittee who can vouch for the nominator's eligibility.

4.2 Nominations: The nomination may nominate any number of works in any category. However, the nominator may nominate any given work only once in a category. All nominations must include the name of the nominator. Where a nominated mark does not meet the criteria for its nominated category, the

committee may move the nomination to the appropriate category; or where a work does not meet any criteria, refuse the nomination.

4.3 Timing of Nominations: Nominations shall be open for a minimum of 30 days. Postal nominations shall be counted as valid based on postmark or receipt, whichever is earliest, if received before the final deadline set by the committee.

5.0 Final Ballot

5.1 Number of finalists: The five nominees with the most nominations shall appear on the final ballot. In the event of a tie for fifth place, up to seven finalists may appear on the final ballot. In the event of a four-way tie (or more) for fifth place, only the top four finalists shall appear on the ballot.

5.2 Minimum nominations for finalists: To appear on the ballot a finalist must attract a minimum of four nominations in the Professional and Best New Talent categories, or two in the Fan and Special Awards categories (including Professional Special Award and William Atheling Jr Award).

5.3 Minimum finalists for categories: In the event of there being three or fewer finalists in any of the following categories, at the committee's discretion, eligible finalists in the Novella or Novelette and Short Story categories may be merged into a single category called Short Fiction; and eligible finalists in the Fanzine and Fan Production categories may be merged into a single category called Fan Production.

5.4 Order of finalists: Finalists shall appear in randomised order.

5.5 No Award: "No Award" shall appear last on the ballot for all categories.

6.0 Voting

6.1 Preferential Voting: Voting in each category shall take place according to a preferential system.

6.2 Eligibility: Votes will be accepted only from full members or supporting members or memberships greater than or equal in value to the supporting membership of the convention.

6.3 Tied Winners: In the event of a tie for winner in any category, all tied works will be deemed to have won the award.

6.4 Timing: Voting shall be open for a minimum of 30 days. Voting periods may differ for postal ballots and other ballots. Postal ballots shall be counted as valid based on postmark or receipt, whichever is earlier, if received before the deadline for other ballots or the deadline for final receipt set by the committee.

7.0 The Physical Nature of the Trophy

7.1 Finalist Certificates: All finalists shall receive an A4 certificate honouring their achievement.

7.2 The Trophy: Ditmar winners shall receive a standard trophy.

8.0 Appendix: Possible Future Changes

Future amendments to this document were foreshadowed at the Natcon Business Meeting of 26 April 2000 and revised at Convergence 2002 and Swancon 2003.

8.1 Formalisation of Nomination and Voting Periods: It is foreshadowed that further formal rules governing timing of ballots be laid down to govern timing of non-postal ballots.

8.2 Withdrawal from Consideration: It is foreshadowed that formal rules should be put in place to direct the Ditmar committee to advise nominees of their nomination and give them the opportunity to withdraw that nomination before the ballot is printed. Further, the membership be advised of any such withdrawal. It was agreed to leave the matter on the table for possible debate in 2003.

8.3 List of Eligible Works: It is foreshadowed that the nomination forms may be accompanied by a list of eligible works and that the list may be published on the Web prior to the close of nominations.

8.4 The Physical Nature of the Trophy: It is foreshadowed that in future Ditmar awards, the trophies shall be of a physical form that is constant from year to year. The design shall be in the proportions of 1:4:9 (the proportions of the monolith in 2001) and shall include a motif of the Southern Cross. Possibilities include the popular Lewis Morley design and the 2003 Ditmar Awards.

8.5 Division of the Best Artwork category: It is foreshadowed that the best Artwork category be divided into three categories, 2D, 3D and digital, with the proviso that the same rules applied to short fiction in Rule 5.3 also apply to the Best Artwork category or categories.

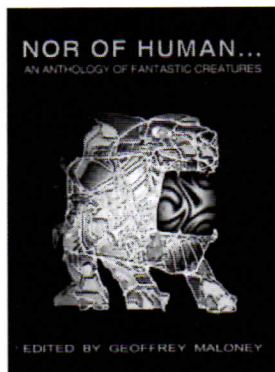
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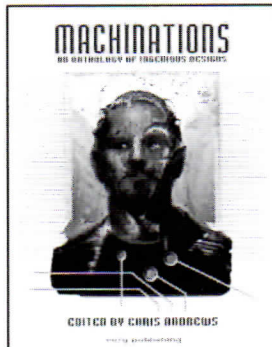
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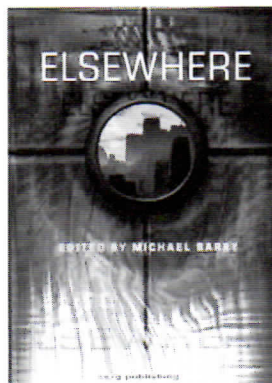
Editors Maxine McArthur and Donna Maree Hanson will bring you an anthology filled with tales of encounters with alien beings, spirits and weird creatures. Encounters that will thrill you, romance you and change you. Find yourself changed by Encounters!



In 2001, CSFG published its first anthology, *Nor of Human, an anthology of fantastic creatures*, edited by Geoffrey Maloney. Jack Dann said it 'put Canberra on the map.' This anthology is now sold out!



In 2002, CSFG published its second anthology: *Machinations, an anthology of ingenious designs*, edited by Chris Andrews.



In 2003, CSFG published its third anthology with financial assistance from ArtsACT. *Elsewhere*, edited by Michael Barry, is an anthology of incredible places. Launched by Trudi Canavan, author of the Black Magician Trilogy, who said, 'Once again the CSFG has gathered together a fine collection of Australian speculative fiction. Prepare to be intrigued, amused and even a little disturbed by the stories within.'

The Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild supports and promotes writers, illustrators and readers of Speculative fiction in the Canberra region and writers from other regions of Australia.

Find out more at www.csfg.org.au

CSFG will be selling anthologies at Conflux. Otherwise available from Dymocks Belconnen, Infinitas, Collins Superstore, Broadway, Gaslight, Dymocks Brisbane, Pulp Fiction, Brisbane, Known Space Books, Adelaide, Slow Glass Books, Melbourne.

Convention Rules



While both the convention and the venue will exercise all due care and responsibility to ensure the safety of participants and their property, no liability will be accepted for loss or damage of items or personal effects brought onto the convention site. Don't leave your valuables lying around unattended.

Nobody may touch or use any equipment set up for the convention, except those who have been officially appointed to do so. Non-compliance with this will result in expulsion from the convention, as well as a legal request for payment of loss or damage to the equipment.

If people wish to record events or panels that they attend, then they first must get the permission of all participants to be videoed or audio taped. People using recording equipment must not obstruct other people's views or thoroughfares. The organisers reserve the right not to allow filming or sound recording for any reason.

A child is a person under 12 years of age, and while in attendance at the convention, must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian at all times. Conflux cannot provide a child minding service to con attendees. Parents and guardians are advised to make their own arrangements for childcare services. For out of town visitors, you should check with your hotel regarding childcare or baby-sitting services.

If you cause any trouble of any sort, the organisers reserve the right to eject you from the convention, the convention site and/or the onsite hotel if you do so. The organisers reserve the right to define what 'trouble' is – you get the gist.

No weapons: nothing that looks like a weapon. No fire, no flame, no flashes, no explosions, NO EXCEPTIONS, due to risk of causality disruption.

There is no official dress code, however, the organisers would prefer not to see your jiggly bits. Lycra is permitted. All people attending the convention must wear footwear – a requirement of the insurers for the convention, the convention centre and the hotel, rather than conservative Victorian attitudes. Don't forget to bathe during the course of the convention. This is at the request of other attendees.

Alcohol may not be brought into the convention site and may only be consumed within the confines of the convention site if purchased from official sources, (ie bars and restaurants).

The use of illegal drugs is expressly forbidden within the convention site. If any member or person who attends Conflux brings, uses, sells or otherwise distributes any type of illegal drug at Conflux, the legal authorities will be

contacted to remove the person/s and no refund will be forthcoming. The attendee will also be banned from the remainder of the convention.

The convention site is a non-smoking venue.

A long-standing tradition of science fiction conventions has been the room party. If you want to hold a room-party, by all means do so, but it is your responsibility to organise. The convention organisers are unable to provide you with staff to assist. There will be a notice board at the Registration Desk if you want to post a public notice about your room party.

As the convention is sharing the hotel with non-convention members, there will be some restrictions on room parties and such. Please be responsible. You are welcome to host a party in your hotel room, but keep the noise down if you don't wish the hotel to close your party down. The room guest will be liable for any malicious damage caused. What you do in your own hotel room is your own business, although most accommodation providers would not approve of you banging on nor making human sacrifices.

If you wish to place items in the Auction, information on how to do so is available at the Registration Desk.

If you wish to bid on items in the Art Show Auction, purchase prints and other items from the Art Show, information on how to do so is available in the Art Show room.

Masquerade Rules:

Costumes must not be made or trimmed with any messy substances, as these may damage another entrant's costume or gum up the chronospheric stabilizing doohickey. No wet, oily or dusty substances, such as wet paint, powder or unfixed sparkles, will be permitted.

No weapons. Nothing that looks like a weapon. No fire, no flame, no flashes, no explosions, NO EXCEPTIONS, due to risk of causality disruption. Taped effects will have to suffice.

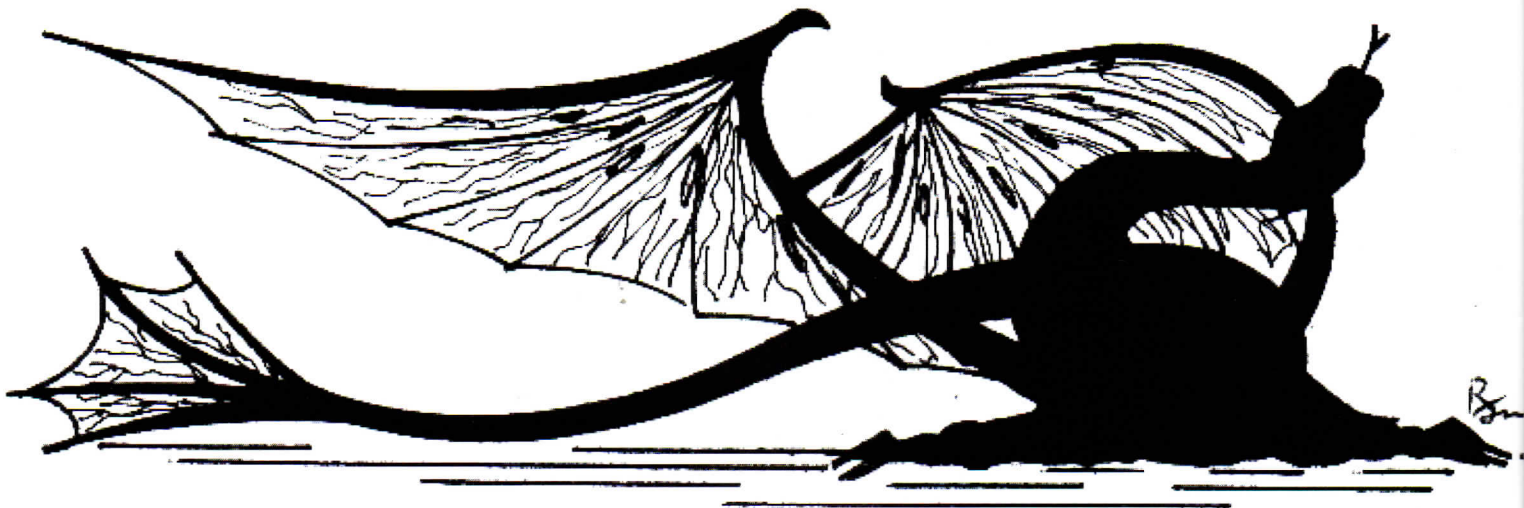
No live animals whatsoever will be allowed in the masquerade (including bioengineered sentients). Only guide dogs and other animals trained to assist a disabled person will be permitted.



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ACT Writers Centre, ACT
Kathleen I Ager, WA
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Patricia Anderson, QLD
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Artsound FM, ACT
Karen Babcock, VIC
Sue Ann Barber, VIC
Chris Barnes, NSW
Louise Barnes, NSW
Stuart Barrow, ACT
Michael Barry, ACT
Graeme Batho, NSW
Susan Batho, NSW
Lee Darren Battersby, WA
Jiri Baum, VIC
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Orb speculative fiction

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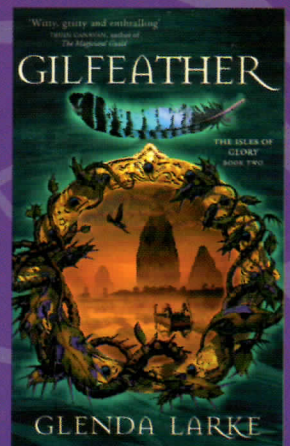
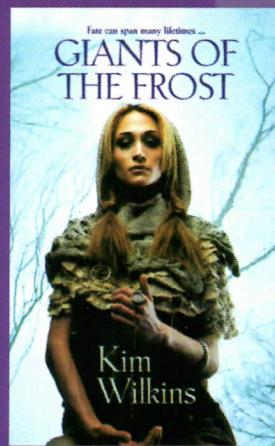
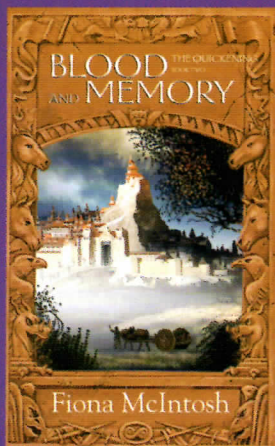
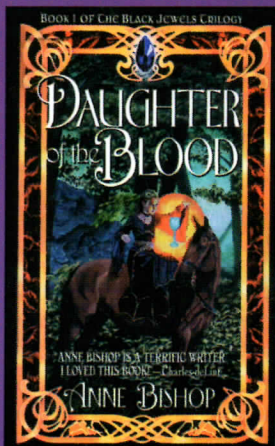
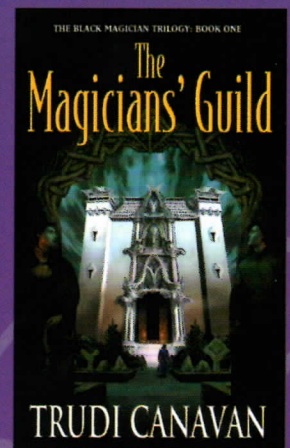
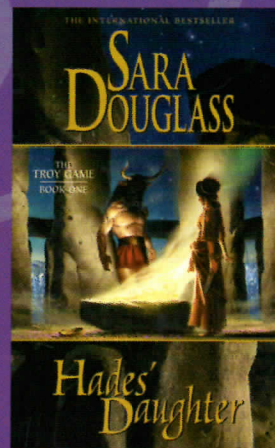
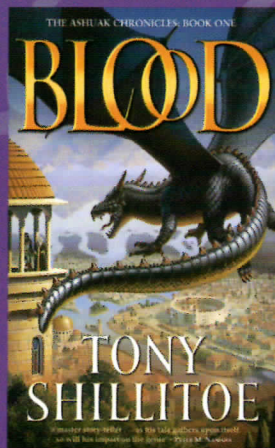
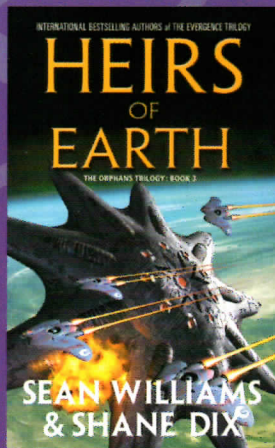
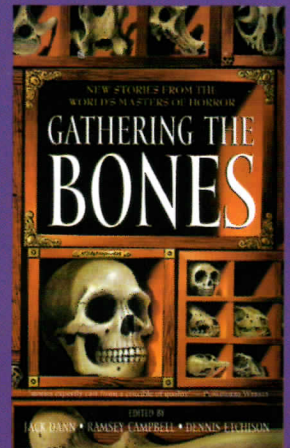
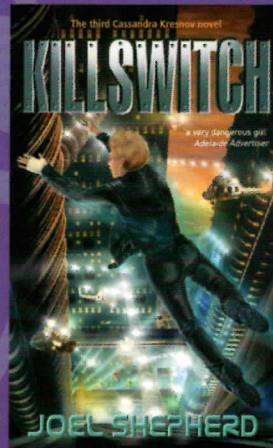
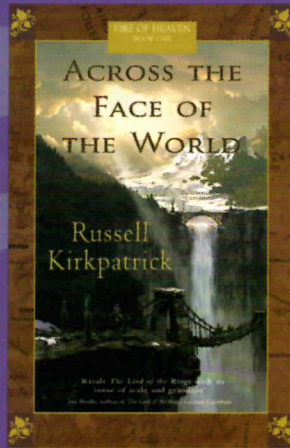
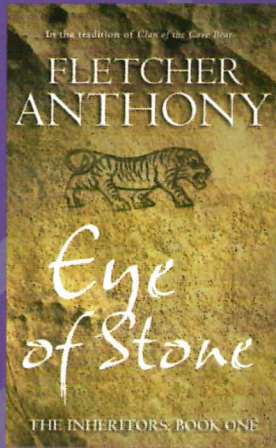
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**Translation: The Pack on the Isle of the Thylacon invite you to attend, if you dare...*

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