

The Antipodean Announcer

Issue No. 2 April 1982

AUSTRALIA'S ALIVE FOR '85!

If you haven't already heard, Melbourne, Australia, is bidding for the 1985 World Science Fiction Convention.

Why should you support the bid? Because we are sure that we can put on a Worldcon to beat all Worldcons. Because Australia is a fascinating place, with a great deal to offer in the way of the unusual, the exciting, the different. Because Melbourne in '85 will be a Worldcon you won't want to miss.

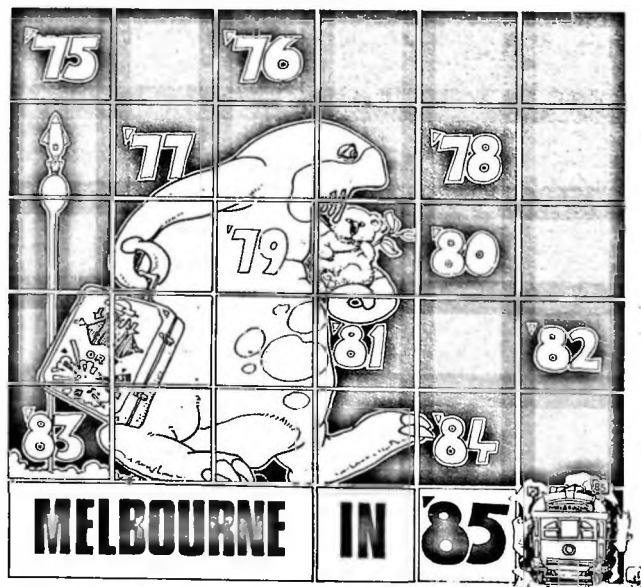
This is the second issue of the bid bulletin, 'The Antipodean Announcer'. Its purpose is to tell you about Australia and Australian fandom. The first issue, which is still available from us or our agents (listed in this issue), told you about the bid, and had two articles on Australian fans. This issue tells you about Australian science fiction and about Australian fanzines. There's also a regular column by one of Australia's best fan writers, John Bangsund.

You can pick up the 'Announcer' if you see it at our stands at major conventions, but to be sure of getting it, you should subscribe to the bid newsletter, 'Kanga Ruse', which will get you each issue of the 'Announcer' thrown in free. That way you will also be actively supporting the bid. We're not offering pre-supporting memberships as such, but subscribing to 'Kanga Ruse' will put you firmly on our mailing list. You can also support us by buying bid T-shirts and badges, now available from us and our agents.

Best of all, though, you can spread the word, by word of mouth or by fanzine:

Make it Melbourne in '85!

T-Shirts Now Available!



Shown above is a reduction of the design on the new Melbourne in '85 T-shirts, available for \$10 (Australian or US) or 6 pounds (UK) from us or our agents. Please make sure you let us know your size. Also now available are 'Melbourne' badges, featuring the famous Melbourne trams, for \$1 (Australian or US) or 60p (UK).

WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW MUCH?

A number of people, quite naturally enough, have been asking us about what hotel the convention will be held in, how much it will cost, and so on. Unfortunately we are not in a position to give you those details yet in this issue of the 'Announcer', as we are at present in the midst of negotiating and examining sites. We are almost certain of the arrangements, which should provide us with a most unusual and splendid site for the convention, and we hope to tell all in the next issue.

The Bidding Committee:

John Foyster (Chairman)
Peter Darling (Secretary)
Christine Ashby (Treasurer)
Derrick Ashby
Paul Stevens
David Grigg

Melbourne in '85 Bidding Committee,
GPO Box 2253U,
Melbourne 3001,
Victoria, AUSTRALIA

Our Agents:

Belgium: Andre De Ruycke,
Eendenplasstraat 64, B-9050, Evergem.

Federal Republic of Germany:
Waldemar Kununing, Herzogspitaistr. 5, D-8000, Munchen 2.

France:
Pascal J. Thomas, 11bis rue Vasco de Gama, 75015 Paris.

Netherlands:
Annemarie Kindt, Posthus 87933, 2508 DH, Den Haag.

Scandinavia:
Anders Bellis, Vanadisvagen 13, S-113 46 Stockholm, Sweden.

United Kingdom:
Joseph Nicholas,
Room 9, 94 St George's Square, Pimlico, London SW17 3QY.

USA:
Joyce Scrivner, 2528 15th Ave Sth. Minneapolis, MN 55404
(please send subscriptions to this address).
Jan Howard Finder, PO Box 428, Latham, NY 12110.

'The Antipodean Announcer' will be distributed free at major conventions around the world, or is included free if you subscribe to the bid newsletter, 'Kanga Ruse', which costs \$10 for two years. The 'Announcer' will contain items of interest about Melbourne, Australia, and Australian fandom, as well as original pieces of fan writing. 'Kanga Ruse' will contain detailed information about the progress of the 'Melbourne in '85' bid.

MELBOURNE · IN · 1985

Science Fiction in Australia

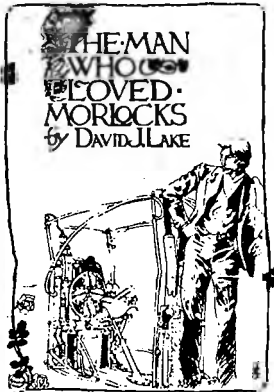
Notes for the Visiting Fireman

by George Turner

The visitor to Australia (in, shall we say, 1985) looking for indigenous science fiction to add to his cellarful of 1926 *Amazing* et al, may be surprised to discover how much there is that has had only limited circulation in America and Great Britain.

It didn't appear overnight, of course. Science fiction was imported in the 1890s with the works of Wells, Verne and Bellamy, but even in 1892 we had our own home-produced novel, *The Germ Growers*, written by (a little unexpectedly) the Dean of St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Melbourne—one Robert Potter. I saw a copy of this forgotten rarity at the National University in Canberra—under glass, safe from fannish fingers.

The progressive Dean did not start a trend. Local sf novels were few and good ones damned few; our literature was very intumed, celebrating mateship, the outback and the bushranger; fantasy was for children and science fiction was for rathags. No novel of real stature appeared until M. Barnard Eldershaw's *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* (1947), a highly original work which has achieved minor classic status in Australia but is not widely known elsewhere. The visiting fireman may track down a copy—at a price, for it is long out of print—and the really choosy reader will find it worth the trouble and expense; there is nothing else in science fiction quite like it.



A flurry of writing and publishing in Sydney at the end of World War II produced a rash of rare and eminently forgettable paperbacks (occasionally to be picked up in decrepit secondhand), and the production scene moved to Melbourne, where Angus & Robertson issued the first national sf anthologies, *The Pacific Book of Australian Science Fiction* (1968) and its companion, *The Second Pacific Book* (1971). These became collector's pieces in America and England, and have recently been reprinted. Among authors featured were John Baxter, Lee Harding, Damien Broderick, Bertram Chandler and Jack Wodhams, all well known today on the world sf scene.

The short story was struggling into sturdy life, but our only novelists of note were Bert (*Commodore Grimes*) Chandler and Nevil (*On the Beach*) Shute, both Englishmen who had elected to make their homes here.

A more important focus at this time was on the fanzines. John Bangsund published the first issue of *Australian Science Fiction Review* in 1966 (just try to buy one of those!) and Bruce Gillespie followed with *SF Commentary* in 1969. These were at once taken up by overseas fans and their letter columns featured the names of Blish, Lem, Aldiss, Farmer and many other sf greats. The two magazines exerted great influence on the critical standards of Australian fans, in turn giving rise to better local writing. Suffice it to say that when Ursula Le Guin mothered (that is the word for her performance) her historic Melbourne writers' workshop just prior to Aussiecon in 1975, the young writers were ready for her.

'Electrifying' is the word I have used elsewhere to describe Ursula's performance in that week-long writing marathon (I was present as an observer for long enough to see her in action and be enthralled) and that remains the only useful adjective for it. And the kids—they were mostly very young—gave back as exultantly as they received. The book collected from the writings of these workshopers, *The Altered I*, was published also in America and most of the nineteen people who attended are still engaged in writing, editing, publishing or otherwise fostering Australian science fiction.

Other workshops followed; other writers were unearthed; Philippa Maddern, David Grigg and Leanne Frahm have published in American

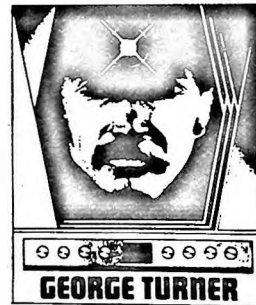
magazines and anthologies. If American publication was sought, it was because the opportunities for genre literature here are small. The population of Australia is about one third that of Britain and only about six per cent that of the United States. The specialist publisher faced with such figures needs courage.

Yet two such specialist sf publishers appeared. The quite phenomenal Paul Collins opened with a magazine, *Void*, in 1975. What he published at first was better forgotten, but he stayed in business, learned the trade and later expanded into hard cover publication. He has now published three very large story anthologies and three novels, *Breathing Space Only*, by Wynne Whiteford, *Looking for Blucher*, by Jack Wodhams, and the final volume of David Lake's 'Breakout' novels; he has three more in preparation.

In the same year (the year of Aussiecon and Ursula Le Guin—something must have been fermenting!) Bruce Gillespie and Carey Handfield launched Norstrilia Press. Named from the works of Cordwainer Smith (who, as you probably know, was Dr Paul Linebarger of the Australian National University and Johns Hopkins University but, alas for our sf, not an Australian), Norstrilia Press was formed for the publication of non-fiction books, books about science fiction and based on the contents of *SF Commentary*. The first volume of essays on Philip K. Dick: *Electric Shepherd* filled that bill but the second shattered the conception forever; it was *The Altered I*. Another workshop book, *The View from the Edge*, followed. Both of these feature in the 1982 high school syllabus; how's that for beginners? An unusual production was Roger Zelazny's volume of poems, *When Pussywillows Last in the Catyard Bloomed*, but their great catch for 1980 was Damien Broderick's *The Dreaming Dragons*, a novel of great intelligence and expertise. What else they plan I don't know, but there will certainly be more on the display racks by 1985.

During this time the novelists were also moving into higher gear. Lee Harding and Damien Broderick had published paperback collections and novels here and in America, but each now made a sudden advance in technique and conception: Harding with *Displaced Person* and Broderick with *The Dreaming Dragons*. Harding's novel took a much coveted award as the best Australian juvenile novel of its year (though 'juvenile' is a poor description of a book for all ages) and was published in the US by Harper and Row as *Misplaced Persons* because of title similarity with another US novel.

Beloved Son



Broderick's book was snapped up by David Hartwell of Pocket Books, who will also be putting out his new novel, *The Judas Mandala*, later this year. Cherry Wilder, now living in Germany, made a hit with her *The Luck of Brin's Five*. Ace put out David Lake's first four 'Breakout' novels and Bert Chandler continued to supply the adventures of John Grimes, who bids fair to finish his promotions as Galactic Dictator after one of the longest series-runs in the genre.

On the short story front Lee Harding, Rob Gerrand and David King have edited all-Australian anthologies of commissioned material and the University of Queensland Press is preparing a historical anthology tracing Australia's science fiction from *The Germ Growers* to the present day.

The visitor in 1985 may find that by then there is more Australian material than can be carried off in a single raid.

SPECIAL THANKS

Our spies at Denvention last year noted down the names of some of those who assisted in folding and distributing our flyer there. So our very special thanks go to: Marc Ortlieb, Sally Beasley, Bruce Pelz, Ed McAllister, Leslie Turek, Craig Miller, Mike Glicksohn, Fred Isaacs, Denny Lien, Jilly Dougherty, Marty Cantor, Jan Howard Finner, Joyce Scrivner, and all of those others whose names we, sadly, don't have. We'll buy you all a beer at Melbourne in '85!

An Introduction to Australian Fanzines

by Leigh Edmonds

There are some people, you know, who enjoy nothing quite so much as the solitary occupation of producing fanzines. If science fiction conventions are places where any number between six and six thousand fans get together to have a good time, then fanzine production is fans enjoying themselves by themselves.

Conventions and fanzines are really very similar, the most obvious difference being that you have to travel to conventions to enjoy the company of other fans while fanzines come to visit you through your mail box, bringing many visitors who entertain, educate, and edify you through what they have written. If conventions are fandom gathered together, fanzines are fandom at large but still in touch.

Take a fanzine editor, put him or her into a room with a typewriter, some blank stencils, and some other written contributions, and he or she will be happily occupied for a long time in producing a fanzine. The reason is that while fans are typing their stencils they are not really alone; they are sharing the community of fans who are also involved in fanzines. Not only are there fanzines being produced in many places all over the world at the same time, but there is the expectation of the response that a fanzine produced now will draw later in the form of letters of comment, other contributions, or trade for other fanzines. And there is also the knowledge that a humorous reference on one page should get a laugh out of a fan you know in Surrey or that another fan in, say, Minneapolis, is going to take issue with a comment in a letter you're printing from a fan in Dunedin. All this harmless entertainment is had without going out the front door and having to brave the traffic in Bondi, Carlton, or somewhere in north Adelaide.

For those who have (for some unaccountable reason) never seen a fanzine, I suppose I should explain that they are mostly amateur magazines published by people who share an interest in science fiction. This doesn't mean that they always contain comments about sf or that they (heaven forbid!) publish it; it just means that sf is a starting place from which fanzine editors launch off to publish material which interests them... but I'll come back to that in a moment.

Fanzines come in all shapes and sizes. Some look highly professional, typeset with well-designed format, interior art, advertisements, and anything else you'd expect to find in a fully professional magazine. On the other hand, there are fanzines which are produced on home duplicators — mimeo machines or the dreaded purple ditto machines. Why, David Grigg claims to have even published fanzines using a hectograph, which is a messy slab of inky jelly! Sometimes the printing is poor and the result is difficult to read, the illustrations badly drawn, and the layout abysmal. Yet some editors look on their fanzines as minor works of art and spend endless hours working on them.



But to most people who are interested in fanzines, the contents are more important than the appearance. There are probably as many opinions about what the ideal contents of a fanzine should be as there are people who produce them. There are those who publish fanzines full of material about science fiction and there are those who give you the impression that sf is the last thing they are interested in.

Fanzines in Australia demonstrate this wide range, and there are some which dedicate most of their space to reviews, criticism of sf, debate of various issues in the field, and comments from the great and famous on the subject. Three of the most notable of these are *SF Commentary* (edited by Bruce Gillespie), *Science Fiction* (edited by Van Ikin), and *The Cygnus Chronicle* (edited by Neville Angove). Of these three, the most well-known would be *SF Commentary*, which has been published more or less continuously since 1969. It contains a wide range of highly informed criticism and comment from a broad spectrum of both fans and professionals of sf. It always seems to get nominated for the Australian

SF Achievement Awards, and rightly so as it is not only the best fanzine of this type in Australia, but one of the very best in the world.

Science Fiction is the closest thing that Australia has to a scholarly journal about the field. This is hardly surprising, as its editor works in the English Department of a university, and so takes a more academic approach to sf. It is always intelligent and thoughtful. *The Cygnus Chronicle* cannot claim to be as authoritative as the other two but has the distinct advantage in appearance (it is about the most elaborately produced of Australian fanzines) and usually carries useful and interesting information on sf.

Moving into the middle ground, there is a whole range of fanzines which are much more obviously amateur productions. This does not mean that in most cases their contents are not worthy of attention: it means that their editors are far less single-minded about discussing sf. Two of those worthy of mention are *Wahf-full* (edited by Jack Herman) and *Weber Woman's Wrevenge* (edited by Jean Weber). Both of these fanzines are edited by enthusiastic people who write about, and encourage their contributors to write about, things which concern them in a lively fashion. At the moment Jack's fanzine is concentrating some of its efforts on the worst sf films and Jean is as always concentrating on feminism and human relations.

S F COMMENTARY

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ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

AUSTRALIAN
SCIENCE FICTION:
A NEW BOOM?

As with most other fanzines, these two also devote space to items about sf fandom as well as sf. There may be reports of conventions, reviews of other fanzines, or general news of what's going on with the editor's friends and acquaintances in fandom.

The next style of fanzine leaves out all the stuff about sf and concentrates on fandom itself. Two examples of this genre in Australia are *Q36* (edited by Marc Ortlieb) and *Ornithopter* (edited by me). Both of these fanzines are published to entertain their readers. There is sometimes fiction about fans, humorous commentaries about the latest fan doings, reviews of fanzines, conventions, and other fannish activities. To the uninitiated, this sort of fanzine is sometimes a little difficult to comprehend, but in some ways it is these fanzines which carry the core of the ethos of fandom from one generation to the next.

A final variety of fanzine is that which carries the news. In Australia we have two, *Australian SF News* (edited by Merv Binns) and *Thyme* (edited by Andrew Brown and Irwin Hirsh). *ASFN* concentrates on the more professional side of events in Australia and overseas while *Thyme* publishes news about what is happening in fandom. Both are very useful.

There are, of course, many more fanzines being produced in Australia than are mentioned in this brief introduction, where it would be impossible to mention or list them all. But you may care to write for these few to the addresses below. They are at least a place to start.

SF Commentary (\$10 for 7 issues; \$US12 for 6 overseas):
Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195/A, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

Science Fiction (\$ for \$4.50):
Van Ikin, English Department, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Western Australia.

The Cygnus Chronicle (\$1.50 per issue):
Neville Angove, PO Box 770, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

Wahf-full (ask nicely):
Jack Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney, NSW 2006

Weber Woman's Wrevenge (\$0.50 per issue, \$US0.75):
Jean Weber, 13 Myall Street, O'Connor, ACT 2601.

Q36 (ask nicely):
Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 46, Marsden, SA 5070.

Ornithopter (\$1 per issue or you can ask nicely):
Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433, Civic Square, ACT 2608.

Australian SF News (\$10 for 6 issues airmail):
Mervyn Binns, 305/307 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000.

Thymes (\$9 for 9 issues or 6 for \$4 airmail):
Irwin Hirsh, 279 Doman Road, South Yarra, Vic. 3141.

MELBOURNE IN 1985

I Remember Aussiecon...Or Do I?

by John Bangsund

Lots of people asked me to write about the Worldcon in Melbourne in 1975. Well, let me tell you that the moment I arrived home in Canberra I started writing my report. I wrote eight pages about the trip back from Melbourne. They're around here somewhere. But I never quite got around to writing about what happened during the five or six days before that. I recall, however, that it was a most pleasant and hectic experience. Oh, and far too many people, too—I should mention that. Over six hundred at times, so I'm told.

I remember when you could go to a Worldcon with two shillings, and there'd be fourteen people there, and you'd come away with twopence change! Ah, them was the days, eh, Jules? Just you and me and H.G. and them neofans. Ah yes.

For me the convention ended that last night when I had taken my leave of Ursula Le Guin. 'Come again,' I said to her. She said 'I'd love to,' that's all, and the lights changed, there on the corner of Bourke and Exhibition Streets, and I walked away from her to the Southern Cross mausoleum. At least, that's when I thought it had ended.



But about 10.30 p.m. on Thursday, 21 August 1975, I dreamt a crazy dream about forty-seven American fans ringing our doorbell. Sally nudged me ever so gently and said 'There are forty-seven American fans at the door!'. I woke up sufficiently to put on my VIP dressing-gown before going to the door and switching on a few lights. Blinking at the assembled throng, I remarked in my most hospitable manner, 'Don't stand out there in the cold. Go home!' Ignoring this polite imperative, Susan Wood, John Berry, and Carey Handfield (heavily disguised in a Nebraska accent) slipped in before I could slam the door. I still don't know who the other forty-four were. Either I imagined them or they went home.

We sat around and talked and had a few drinks for a few hours, and then went to bed. It was 11.30 p.m. and we'd all had enough. I slept fitfully. I kept on having nightmares about Susan Wood and John Berry being in our house, and forty-two faceless fans milling about our front garden, sullenly cheering the efforts of Jack Chalker and Bob Tucker to slip down our chimney simultaneously.

On Friday morning I swept all the bottles, food scraps, fanzines, cats, and so on into a neat pile in the lounge-room where Sally would find them without any trouble when she came home from work, and noticed while doing this a figure resembling Carey Handfield asleep in the room. I poured myself a stiff coffee. The figure roused itself. It now looked like Carey Handfield in pyjamas, which further alarmed me. Fans don't wear pyjamas. I poured myself another stiff coffee, and Carey came back into the room and asked if he could have some.

'Handfield,' I said, 'is it true that you are here in my lounge-room in pyjamas?'

'It is,' he said.

'Is it possible that Susan Wood and John Berry are somewhere in this house?' I asked politely.

'They are,' he said. I opened a bottle.

I forget exactly what we all did that day, apart from talking a lot and walking all over town looking for string, post offices, and toy koalas and having lunch and driving up Mount Ainslie to look at Canberra. Ah, it's coming back to me now. We found this bloke up Mount Ainslie who'd locked his keys in the car, and I said I'd ring his service organisation when we got back down. I did. They asked me for his membership number, and I said he'd locked the card in his car; they asked me for the car's registration number and I said I'd forgotten to note it. The serviceman sort of sighed and said he would send a service van up the mountain Real Soon.

I suspect he didn't really believe me. If you're ever up Mount Ainslie and you see this bloke looking hungry and confused outside a brownish Ford Escort, would you mind telling him that I rang up for him? Ta.

About 5 we sent Carey out to the airport to pick up Mike Glicksohn and Sheryl Birkhead. I didn't believe he would come back with them, especially since I'd given him a map of Waukegan, Illinois, instead of Canberra, ACT, but he did. I keep on forgetting that Butley Griffin came from Illinois. Suddenly we had a house full of fans, and I felt a strange sense of *deja vu* (that's French for 'When does this convention end?').

About 9 we were all miles away in the depths of sinful New South Wales, eating unpronounceable Yugoslavian food at one of my favourite little restaurants in Queanbeyan. When we all rolled home we found a note under the door that confirmed my fond imaginings of the previous evening. I quote: 'Ve was here but you was not, so it goes. We are at the Lytham Flag Inn. Ned Brooks, Chalker, Stu Tait, Joan Srrrano, Jake Waldham.' We consulted maps of Canberra (and Waukegan, Toronto, Vancouver, and Gaithersburg) and could find no place called Lytham Flag or even Lytham, so we decided it was all a hoax and got down to some more serious talking and drinking.

Saturday morning: a bright, sunny, unseasonable Canberra day. Beside me on the back steps is John Berry. We are drinking Guinness and there is between us a profound sense of communion, of mutual fondness and respect, of wonder, well-being, and hangover. We do not speak. Behind us, on the porch, Carey and Mike are playing table-tennis. Occasionally one of them steps in the cats' food and there is a polite, gentlemanly oath uttered. Sheryl, Susan, and Sally are on the lawn before us, playing with the cats and talking lady talk. If fandom did not exist, I think again to myself, it would need to be invented, if only for idyllic moments like this.

During the afternoon we all sat around listening to an incredible record sent to me by Rune Forsgren, a Swedish fan. Then some of us went off and invaded the Private Cellar Club, where I picked up a few dozen bottles to replenish my dwindling post-convention stores, and Mike failed to convince the cellar-master of the virtues of Canadian wines. Susan was back at the house, writing her con-report for *Locus*, and Sally was there too, wondering whether she was cooking enough beef stroganoff and kitch lorraine to feed seven. Mike, John, Sheryl, and Carey agreed with me that we should drive up Red Hill to look at Canberra from the back end, but the Renault, which has a mind of its own, developed a flat tyre, so we didn't.

We were just about to settle down to dinner when Robin Johnson, Fred Patten, and Don Fitch arrived. Sally panicked, of course, but I knew we could rely on her lovely heavy hand. Most of the ten of us had second helpings. About 8 we were joined by Bobby Saxby and Rosemarie Bell. Twelve isn't a large number for a party, but even so we split into at least three sub-parties before long, with sercon fandom in the living-room, fannish fandom in the dining room, and dishwashing fandom in the kitchen. I dimly recall talking until all hours with Bobby and Rosemarie in my junkroom (or study, as I sometimes call it) long after the others had departed or gone to bed.

Sunday was sad. We didn't want all these wonderful people to go. There were hugs, kisses, and wild promises all round ('See you in Kansas City', for example), and Don Fitch appeared in the far distance just in time for all of us to wave to him. (He had stayed at the Canberra Youth Hostel. A man of great fortitude.) Then Carey, John, and Susan set off for Sydney; Robin, Fred, and Don for the Snowy Mountains; and Sheryl, Mike, Sally, and I for the airport: I hate leave-takings, and shall gloss over our feelings at this time.

Monday, confident that the last North Americans had dribbled out of Canberra, we found ourselves dead tired and attempting to play host to Grace and Don Lundry. A delightful couple they are too, and we enjoyed their company. I forgive them readily if they did not enjoy ours; we were not exactly at our sparkling best by then.

The 33rd World Science Fiction Convention now seems a long way in the past. If only I could get over the lingering suspicion that Don Fitch is still out there at the Canberra Youth Hostel, and that forty-seven American fans who missed the flight are going to ring our doorbell tonight.

'The Antipodean Announcer' is published by the Melbourne in '85 Bidding Committee.

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