

Redback

Redback #1 is the first of a new series of newsletters for the Down Under Fan Fund, published by the North American DUFF administrator, John D. Berry, 525 19th Avenue East, Seattle, Washington 98112, USA. *Redback* is sent to everyone on the current DUFF mailing list (that is, recent voters and contributors, and known Interested Parties); you can get on the mailing list by the simple expedient of contributing money or auctionable material to DUFF (being sure to give your name and address to one of the administrators, too). *Redback* is distributed in Australia and New Zealand by the Australian DUFF administrator, Terry Dowling, 11 Everard Street, Hunters Hill, NSW 2110, Australia. (10/10/89)

Nominations

Nominations are now open for the 1990 DUFF race, which will send a fan from Australia or New Zealand to ConDiego, the North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC), in San Diego, California, over Labor Day weekend (Aug. 30–Sept. 3) of 1990. To be a candidate, you need five nominators: three from Australasia and two from North America. Each nominator must state in writing that he or she is nominating you. You must send the nominations, a non-refundable \$10 bond, a written platform of not more than 100 words, and a written pledge that if elected you will make the trip and then fulfill the duties of the DUFF administrator. (Actually, all of these can be done by your nominators, except for your written pledge, which obviously has to be your own.) All of this stuff can go to either administrator. The deadline for nominations is midnight of January 15, 1990.

What a candidate needs

Five nominators

Three from Australasia

Two from North America

\$10 bond (in either currency)

Written platform (100 words or less)

Pledge that you'll go

Where the winner goes

ConDiego/NASFiC 1990

San Diego, California

August 30–September 3, 1990

Frequent newsletters in theory and practice

What a great idea it was! A lively, frequent DUFF newsletter! That's what I promised, with full rashness aforethought, in my platform in the last DUFF race. And that was last winter (septentriohemispherically speaking). Sorry it's taken me so long to get my first newsletter out. The short version of "why" involves exhaustion and minor illness after I got home from Australia in April, combined with an intense set of overlapping deadlines for the freelance work that keeps a roof over my head and food on the table. In retrospect, of course, there must have been interstices in which I could have gotten out at least a cursory newsletter, but somehow the interstices all seemed to close up whenever I looked at them closely. I did want to get this out before the worldcon in Boston, but it was simply impossible.

I still think highly of the idea of sending out frequent newsletters, as a way of not only keeping DUFF in people's minds but helping to weave together the disparate strands of fandom in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada. Apart from travel and phone calls, fanzines and letters are the principal means that science fiction fans have of communicating with other fans in far-flung places — of maintaining the *community* of fandom over time and space. Although there are always fanzines being published, my impression is that there haven't been that many fanzines published recently in either Australia or North America (I haven't seen *any* fanzine from New Zealand lately), and that few of those that are published encourage interaction between the branches of fandom in the northern and southern hemispheres. (*Your* fanzine, naturally, is the exception.)

Cohesiveness and interaction in fanzines run in cycles, and we seem to be in a slack cycle at the moment; nonetheless, there *are* interesting fanzines being published on both sides of the Pacific. One of the things I'd like to do with *Redback* is to make people aware of each other's fanzines and encourage fans on both continents to talk to more than just the people they see every week. Communication in fandom is at its best when people are talking to each other through their fanzines; it seems to me that DUFF, by its international nature, can quite appropriately help to nurture the fanzine community, and by doing so can help to further DUFF's most basic purpose: communication between Australasian and North American fandoms.

(I don't plan to turn *Redback* into a fanzine-review fanzine, nor a newszine — both of which are a bit beyond the purview of DUFF — but it may partake of a few aspects of both from time to time.)

The most off-the-wall of the fanzines I acquired at Swancon was definitely *Get Stuffed*. It seems to be an outgrowth of the energy of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, but *Get Stuffed* burst on the scene a few months before Swancon with a single monomaniacal goal in life: to get a Ditmar award. "Get Stuffed! Death or Ditmar," proclaimed its crest. The contents of *Get Stuffed* laid waste to pretensions, starting with their own. "We are the new wave of fandom. We take no prisoners, only awards." Apart from the exhortations to give *Get Stuffed* a Ditmar, the main subject of the fanzine seemed to be sex.

And it worked. They won. *Get Stuffed* was voted Best Fanzine of the year at Swancon. And their star cartoonist, Ian Gunn, won as Best Artist. And co-editor Danny Heap stuck the award down his pants.

Have they kept publishing? I don't know. They made their point, after all. But you could ask. It's PO Box 41, West Brunswick, Vic. 3055, Australia.

The trip itself

In mid-March of this year, I headed out for Australia, accompanied by Eileen Gunn. We snuck into the country where they'd least expect us: in Cairns, up on the tropical Queensland coast. From there we made a bee line for Perth (stopping only to inspect the used bookstores of Alice Springs) — far-ooof exotic Perth, host to this year's Australian National Convention, Swancon XIV. After sampling the highlights of downtown Perth on a holiday weekend, and reaching our farthest-west point among the docks and shops of Fremantle, we began the long swing back through the fan centers of the south and east. At a brief stop in Adelaide we toned up for the Melbourne party scene by climbing a handy mountain. In Melbourne we were hopelessly outmatched by the vigor and complexity of the social swirl, but we did discover a great place to eat lunch and a bookstore with an empty pit for a floor. Another brief stop showed us more of Hobart and southeastern Tasmania that you'd think was possible in just two days, then it was back through the Melbourne airport — with our first taste of the air-traffic controllers' strike to come — and on to Sydney. There Eileen's stamina gave out, and mine flagged, but we did our best to do justice to the city and to grab onto as many of the threads of Sydney fandom as we could hold.

In mid-April, after four weeks of traveling around, we got the last flight out of Sydney before the strike closed in behind us, stopped in Brisbane for a couple of last-minute bookstores, and headed home.

That's the bare bones.

But what about the people, you say. What about the fans for whom this trip was made, and by whom it was made possible? Anecdote will have to wait for my finished trip report (*realsoonnow*, you bet), but this is certainly the place to thank publicly the people who put us up: Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown (Perth), Yvonne Rousseau and John Foyster (Adelaide), Wendy and Irwin Hirsh (Melbourne), Robin and Alicia Johnson (Hobart), and Kerrie Hanlon (Sydney). Huzzahs all around. I'd also like to thank the Swancon committee for putting on the convention that I traveled so far to attend.

Oh, and if you're ever in Alice Springs, don't fail to pick up a few of the wickety-grub refrigerator magnets.

Money

DUFF ain't rich. In fact, the costs of my trip to Swancon (air fare to Australia, and an air pass for travel within Australia) just about wiped out the fund's U.S. account, and took a healthy chunk out of the Australian account as well (for day-to-day expenses during the trip). We can use any donations you care to make, whether money or material for auction.

Here's the rundown on income and expenses since I took over from Lucy Huntzinger as North American administrator. All amounts are in U.S. dollars.

Income	
Received from Lucy	\$1666.75
Donations & sales of trip reports	276.53
Auction at Corflu	321.29
 Subtotal (income)	 \$2264.57
Expenses	
R-T ticket to Cairns	\$784.86
Airpass within Australia	903.35
Misc. expenses	11.02
 Subtotal (expenses)	 \$1699.34
 Total balance in U.S. fund	 \$565.34

We've also received auction material from a bunch of people, and I only hope I've managed to keep a record of everyone who contributed. (If your name should appear here and it doesn't, please let me know. You'll receive my most abject apology, suitable for framing.) Thanks are due to Jane Hawkins, Joyce Scrivner, Anna Vargo, and Thom Walls for donating auction material, and to Alan Bostick, Jane again, Jerry Kaufman, and Suzanne Tompkins for transporting various auction materials to me from the four corners of the earth. (I'm *absolutely sure* I'm leaving someone out. Boy, is my face red!) Thanks, too, to Ole Kvern and Jay Kinney for help in getting this issue of *Redback* out.

Mail auction

One of the traditional methods of raising money for DUFF is auctions. The single largest contribution to DUFF in North America since I took over has been the proceeds of the auction at Corflu, in Minneapolis last spring. Quite a lot of auction material has come in since then, most of it fanzines old and new. There didn't seem much point in trying to conduct an auction at Noreascon, after the poor results of last year's TAFF/DUFF auction in New Orleans; even if we have better timing and more publicity than the Nolacon auction had, a fannish auction at a worldcon just doesn't seem to generate much money. (Those few who were present at the Nolacon auction agreed that there were some fine fanzines being auctioned, but the audience was such a hard-core assemblage of fanzine collectors that most of us already had the fanzines in our own collections. Not enough fanzines or money changed hands to justify the considerable efforts of the auctioneers and organizers.)

The success of the mail auctions conducted by recent administrators of TAFF suggests that this is the way for DUFF to go, too. So as soon as I can get these stacks and boxes of fanzines and paraphernalia organized and catalogued, I'll put together a mail auction for DUFF. The next issue of *Redback* should have details. There's good stuff in those boxes. Watch for it!

Who voted last time

The following fans sent their votes to the Australian administrator:

Justin Ackroyd, Christine Ashby, Derrick Ashby, Don Ashby, Sally Beasley, Valma Brown, Cindy Clarkson, Garry P. Dalrymple, P. Darling, Leigh Edmonds, John Foyster, Bruce Gillespie, Carey Handfield, Joanna Handfield, Kerrie Hanlon, Irwin Hirsh, Wendy Hirsh, Eric Lindsay, Lewis Morley, Michelle Muijsert, Chris Nelson, Roman Orszanski, Robin M. Pen, Marilyn Pride, Yvonne Rousseau, Gerald Smith, Nick Stathopoulos, Grant L. Stone, Jean Weber, Roger Weddall.

The list of North American voters was given in *Dropbear Digest* #3, Lucy Huntzinger's final DUFF newsletter.

DUFF, the NASFiC, and the worldcon

In *Sweetness & Light 2*, in June, former DUFF administrator Jack Herman wrote at length about the upcoming race and the nature of North American conventions. He was basically disagreeing with Irwin Hirsh, who had written in *Larrikin 21* earlier in the year that he was uncomfortable with the idea of sending the next DUFF winner to a second-best con (the NASFiC) instead of to a worldcon. Jack's basic point (if I may paraphrase it) was that DUFF was an exchange between Australian and North American fandoms, that it was not necessarily connected with the worldcon, and that the reason Australian DUFF winners usually go to the worldcon was that that was usually the biggest North American con, and was therefore the best place to meet the largest number of fans. Jack also said that skipping a year would be dangerous to DUFF's continuity.

Terry Dowling, as Australian DUFF administrator, wrote a response to Jack's essay (largely agreeing with him). Although it's obvious that Terry and I decided to go ahead with the race and send the winner to the NASFiC, I think it's germane to reprint Terry's comments here.

Terry Dowling: I agree completely with Jack's remarks re the 1990 DUFF Race in S&L #2, June 89.

The important thing is that fandom is served fairly, that the ambassadorial nature of DUFF be maintained especially in those years when there is no Worldcon held in the US.

I see how some might find a point of concern here, but find no real issue. What Jack says is true. US DUFF winners do not come down to a Worldcon but to a natcon. They visit a fan community, and a natcon is what we offer *at the very least*; a natcon is what an Oz ambassador can expect *at the very least*.

This will increasingly become the case as the Worldcon (in order to merit such a name) *must* go outside the US more and more frequently or run the risk of becoming the American "Worldcon" as opposed to a truly representative Worldcon. That is the real issue here — the coincidence of the US natcon and the Worldcon.

That the US natcon is most often a Worldcon at present is certainly a bonus, but surely cannot be offered as any kind of determining factor for the Oz side of the DUFF Race. I attended Bubonicon

20, Nolacon 2 and Loscon 15. Nolacon 2 (the Worldcon) was wonderful, but so would any natcon (or any con at all) be held in New Orleans.

Parity is what matters here — a fairness and equivalence that will become more evident as the Worldcon becomes less and less an exclusively American event lent out to other nations. The sooner NASFiC and the Worldcon are perceived as being separate and just happening to coincide the better. Their coincidence so often, for so long, may have led to some regrettable misunderstandings as to the true purpose of DUFF. The DUFF Race for 1990 should go ahead as intended.

John D. Berry: And so it has. The natures of NASFiCs and worldcons are questions for endless debate, but the nature of DUFF does not depend on them. DUFF's purposes are served as well — or as badly — by whatever huge North American convention is considered the most important of the year. If DUFF's decision makes any difference at all to the worldcon or the NASFiC, then we are making a small statement in favor of Terry and Jack's point — which is so far largely theoretical — that the worldcon is truly a *world* convention, not just the U.S. national con. Which seems completely in the international spirit in which DUFF was conceived and born.

Redback

Getting one of these things out requires slaying the twin dragons of lethargy and creeping perfectionism. I haven't managed to kill them, actually, but I sort of got them drunk and silly, and eventually they lay down in the corner and went to sleep. Nonetheless, their influence is everywhere, and you might accurately describe this fanzine, like so many of the fanzines that I've produced, as a product of lethargic perfectionism.

Why *Redback*? Ask me next time.