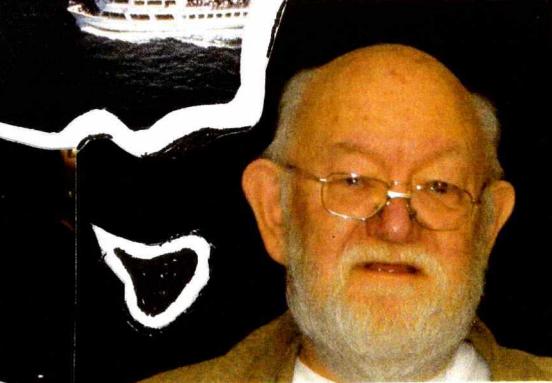
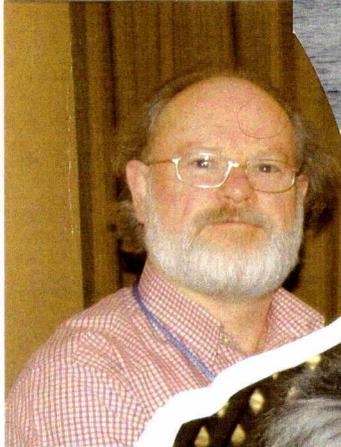
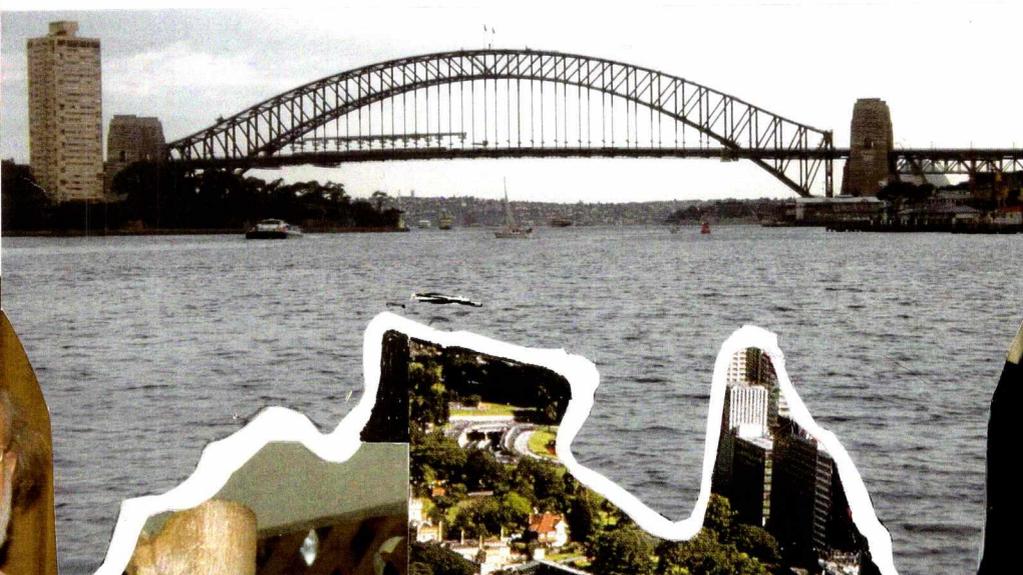


Sue and Steve's Excellent Adventure In Australia



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An accounting of our 2008 DUFF travels in Australia by Sue and Steve Francis. All requests for copies should come to Sue and Steve Francis at PO Box 58009, Louisville Kentucky 40268-0009 or e-mail to sjf1138@aol.com or sfsue@aol.com.

Copies are priced at \$5.00 each (plus postage if by mail) with all proceeds going to the benefit of future Down Under Fan Funds.

The Down Under Fan Fund provides funds to help send fans from North America to Australia or New Zealand and fans from down under to North America. Travel is timed so that the recipient can attend the Worldcon or other major convention in the destination country. We were fortunate enough to be elected DUFF delegates for 2008 and as such attended Swancon 33, the Australian National Convention, held in Perth, Western Australia, the 20th through the 24th of March, 2008.

Also required of DUFF winners is that they become administrators for the Down Under Fan Fund for the next two years, or until a new delegate is elected, raise funds for DUFF, and publish a trip report recounting their travels.

Acknowledgements

We met many old friends and made many more new ones on this our second trip to Australia. We would like to thank the following people for their help and hospitality without whom this trip would not have been possible.

USA: Pat and Roger Sims, Naomi Fisher and Pat Molloy, Joe Siclari and all of the fans who voted for us in 2008.

Perth: Anna Hepworth, Linda Deegan, Davina Watson, "Just Ken", Elaine Walker, John Robertson, Glenda Larke and all of the other guests and committee members of Swancon 33.

Sydney: Edwina Harvey.

Hobart: Robin and Alicia Johnson, Cary Lenehan and the pastor of the Baptist church on Sandy Bay Road that made Sue feel so welcome.

Adelaide: Damien Warman and Juliette Woods.

Melbourne: Justin and Jenny Ackroyd, Janice Gelb, Stephen Boucher, Bill Wright, Perry Middlemiss, Rose Mitchell and the Nova Mob Club members who made us feel so welcome. Special thanks to Julian Warner and Lucy Sussex who let us stay in their home during our stay in Melbourne even though they were away in New Zealand at the time.

Nominators: Pat Molloy and Naomi Fisher, Pat and Roger Sims, James Briggs and Sandra Childress, Eric Lindsay, Stephen Boucher and Janice Gelb.

And finally Murray Moore, our worthy opponent in the 2008 DUFF race.

Sue and Steve's Excellent Adventure in Australia

(This is a narrative of our 2008 DUFF travels in Australia as told by both of us.)

One evening in mid December we received a phone call from Naomi Fisher just after she had attended the 2007 SmofCon. Naomi, Janice Gelb and Joe Siclari had been talking about the 2008 DUFF race or actual lack of a race. Only one person had agreed to participate in the DUFF election and attend the Australian National Convention (Swancon) in Perth, Western Australia. That person was Murray Moore of Canada. Naomi and Janice told Joe that Steve and I had agreed to run in the DUFF race after I retired from working at the Louisville Free Public Library. They knew that we were now both retired, and probably could be convinced to run for DUFF. Joe Siclari sent us an e-mail informing us that Janice and Naomi had told him that we might agree to enter the DUFF race. Steve and I discussed running for DUFF and decided to go ahead even though we had already planned a long driving trip to the Denver Worldcon this summer. We finally agreed that we could probably do both trips in one year. We sent an e-mail to Joe telling him that we would indeed participate in the DUFF race. We wrote the 100 word platform statement saying why we would like to win the DUFF trip to Australia and sent it along with the \$25.00 entry fee to Joe. Our main reason for this trip (should we win) would be to meet new fans and to get back in touch with Australian fans that we already knew. We also wanted to visit some places that we had not been to previously in 1999.

We were excited about being in the race and contacted many fans that we knew in all parts of North America, Europe and Australia to let them know that we were in the race and would like them to vote. The voting period was from January 1st through January 31st, 2008. Naomi had volunteered to talk to people about voting for DUFF. There were other

fans also helping us by getting out the vote. We went to Chattacon in 2008 as this was the only convention we could get to during the voting period. As we anxiously awaited the results, we asked ourselves “had we done enough to win?” On February 5th, Joe Siclari sent us an email with the results of the voting. We were greatly surprised when Joe told us we had won the election to be DUFF delegates for 2008.

After checking airfares with several airlines, we settled on American/Qantas for our travel arrangements. Janice Gelb and Pat Sims helped us with contact information for Australian fans. By the 12th of March, our itinerary was set, our tickets were ordered and we were set to go on our second trip to Australia. Unfortunately, the Australia and New Zealand National Conventions were held on the same weekend, so we could only attend one of them. We were packed by Sunday evening, and had made final arrangements for one of our granddaughters, Melissa to stay at our house to take care of our 10 year old dog Zelda.



Monday, March 17, 2008.

Everett, our eldest son, took us to the airport Monday morning. We loaded the luggage and started for the airport. As we turned onto Dixie Highway we saw blue lights flashing ahead. We turned around and went the back way to bypass the accident. Apparently, two cars tried to occupy the same space at the same time.

We got to the airport in plenty of time and went through security. We waited at the American Airlines terminal for about 1½ hours, at which time we were told that our flight was delayed 30 more minutes. This was going to make our connection very close in Chicago. As we were

discussing alternate flights, the board flashed another delay. This confirmed that we would not make the connection to LA in Chicago. We went to the counter and talked to the agent. She tried to get us on Northwest Airlines through Memphis, Tennessee. The ticket agent could not get the computer to print out a new ticket. As this was an international flight, and the agent was inexperienced, we were delayed further. We stood there and watched both the Chicago and Memphis flights take off with us still in the airport. They had taken our luggage off of the American flight to Chicago. The agent searched alternate flights for us and found a flight through Dallas in first class. She told us that she could not get a flight for us to LA until the next day and we would have to stay over night in Dallas and there would be a paid hotel voucher waiting for us at the ticket counter. That did not make us happy because we wanted to be in LA on Monday night to catch our Australia bound flight. When we arrived in Dallas, we asked about the voucher and were told that we would have to pay for our overnight stay. I asked to speak to a supervisor to lodge a complaint about our treatment by the airline. After waiting about an hour, the supervisor (Billie Denton) found us a flight to LA that night that would arrive in time for our connection to Australia. We only had 20 minutes to find the gate and board the plane, but we made it just in time. Billie had taken good care of us and booked first class tickets to LA. We arrived at LAX, went to the correct terminal and waited about an hour. The Qantas plane to Sydney was late coming into LAX, so we had no trouble boarding. Because of the long flight, Steve decided to wear a pair of house slippers on the plane for comfort. His shoes were in his checked in luggage. Big mistake!

Tuesday and Wednesday, March 18 and 19, 2008.

The 14 hour flight was uneventful and a bit boring (We both slept off and on through the flight). When we arrived in Sydney, we went to retrieve our luggage for passage through customs. We waited and waited for our luggage to exit the carousel to no avail. Fortunately, we had packed enough extra clothing in our carry-on bags to last us two or three days. While we actually made our flight from Dallas to LA, our luggage did not and was still in Dallas when we arrived in Sydney. There was a long line in Sydney at the lost luggage office. When Steve got to the counter, they told him to wait until we arrived in Perth to file the complaint. There was not enough time left to file the required paperwork and still catch the plane to Perth. The clerk said we would have our luggage in 24 to 48 hours. (Famous last words!)

Wednesday, March 19, 2008.

We boarded our flight from Sydney to Perth and enjoyed the “short” flight across Australia to the west coast. While we were checking on our luggage, there was a page for Sue to come to the Qantas office. We found out that she had accidentally left her wallet on the plane. The decision was made that the airline should hold it at the lost and found office until we returned to Sydney. Sue did still have her passport, so she did have proper identification with her. We got a taxi at the airport and were delivered to our hotel in Northbridge early that afternoon.

Northbridge is a suburb on the north side of Perth about a mile from the downtown area. The weather in Perth felt great as we had left ten inches of snow on the ground at home. The desk clerk was very helpful in trying to locate our lost luggage. Our room was quite spacious and clean. It was not the usual hotel style rectangular room, but was in an odd corner of the building and had angular walls. We took a shower, changed into clean clothes and walked about 4 blocks to James Street

where there were a number of restaurants and other businesses. The Wednesday night pre-convention guest dinner was held at the Utopia Restaurant and featured a strict vegetarian menu. We met quite a few folks from the committee. The first was Linda Deegan, (the convention



secretary) who we had been corresponding with to make membership arrangements as DUFF delegates. We also met Elaine Walker, the treasurer, Glenda Larke and Ken Macleod (two of the guests), “Just Ken” and his wife Mel, Anna Hepworth, the convention convenor and

others on the committee. “Just Ken” used this name on his badge to prevent any confusion with the Guest of Honor, Ken Macleod. He and his wife took us under their wing and introduced us to others at the gathering. We were still in a bit of a fog, so we do not remember all of the names of everyone we met. After a very pleasant evening we walked back to the hotel for a very good night’s sleep.

Thursday, March 20, 2008.

We got up and called Qantas Airlines to check on our delayed baggage with no luck. We then decided we needed to get Steve some new shoes (he was still wearing his slippers at this point). We walked about a mile to the downtown shopping street and found a shoe store. We bought a pair of black tennis shoes for Steve and a pair for me as well. We found that Perth is a very cosmopolitan city on the west coast of Australia, but is very isolated from the rest of the country’s population centers on the

east coast. On the way back to the hotel, we stopped at an internet café where I was able to send a message home to let them know we had arrived safely. We were a bit tired after a three hour shopping tour so we took a two hour nap. Are we getting old or what?

After our nap and cleaning up, we wandered over to the All-Seasons hotel where Swancon was being held. We picked up our membership

packets and talked to Larke and some of the others that we had met the pre-con dinner. She introduced us to Annaleise



to Glenda the others the the pre-con introduced Bear and

we had a very nice conversation. Just Ken saw us and took Steve up to his room. Steve met John Robertson who had some extra clothing that no longer fit him. Steve now has another shirt to wear. Ken also gave us some TIM TAMS, a delicious Australian candy to share. He had asked us the night before if we had ever tried a Tim Tam and we had to admit that we had not. Just Ken took care of that and gave Steve three different packages of them (original Chocolate, Classic Dark Chocolate and Love Potions with a sticky vanilla toffee in the center).

YUMMMMMMMMMM! We were not sure that we should thank Just Ken for them. The Tim Tams are just like potato chips (you can't just eat one). He also sent an extra bottle of water for Sue. Yes, I should say Thank you! Thanks, Just Ken. We happened to have some photos on our digital camera that were taken a few days before we left home. They showed ten inches of snow on the picnic table in our back yard and on the cars. We showed them to some of the people at the convention expecting an unusual reaction. They all asked "When were these pictures taken?" We replied "Last week!" They couldn't believe it because the temperature in Perth was in the mid 90's.

While we were talking to others, a man made eye contact with me holding a set of keys in his hand. It was Justin Ackroyd. Julian Warner is letting us stay in his house while we are in Melbourne. As the keeper of Julian's house keys he was just letting us know that they were here. We hosted Julian at our home a few years earlier when he was the DUFF delegate in 2002 before traveling to the Worldcon in San Jose'. We went to the convention's opening ceremonies, and really enjoyed the movie clips from classic science fiction movies from over the years. The second item was brief clips from BBC television shows celebrating their 70th anniversary. We were then introduced as the DUFF Delegates from the US. The NAFF Delegate was introduced, and then the guests of the convention.



They included Glenda Larke, Ken Macleod, Robert Shearman, and Zara Baxter. opening ceremonies were well attended. After the opening ceremonies we talked with other people and decided we were hungry. We ordered some fish and chips in the restaurant. While we were there Justin came

over and talked to us. We had a nice chat about a lot of things, conventions, old stories and he showed us pictures of his daughter Lisa. She is a cutie. The boys had better watch out.

While we were talking Juliette Woods and Damien Warman and two of their friends came over and introduced themselves to us. We would be staying with them at their home when we reach Adelaide. Their friends were from Sydney, however they would not be in Sydney when we got there as they were planning to stay over in Perth a few days.

We talked to Justin a while longer and decided we were getting tired and were ready to go back to the hotel. Justin asked if we would like an escort as it was getting late. He walked the three blocks back to the hotel with us and discovered that Perry Middlemiss had arrived. He and Perry stopped to talk and we went on to the room for a good nights sleep.

Friday, March 21, 2008.

It is 5:30 AM, and we are still suffering the effects of jet lag. Steve got up early and decided we should wash a few clothes. After finishing washing clothes, I called the airport and found that the luggage is still in Dallas. The desk clerk was very helpful in trying to locate our lost luggage. She placed several calls to the airport during the day but had no luck. We walked over the convention hotel for a panel we were on at 11AM in the cocktail lounge. The panel was called "Fan Fund Traveler's Tales". We were joined by Damien Warman, Juliette Woods, Ju Landeese, and David Cake. Most of the audience had been winners of one of the fan funds and could well appreciate the stories told. We also described how the fan funds were set up and run. Many of the audience had tales of their own to tell. Before the panel we were in the sitting area in front of the hotel when Janice Gelb and Stephen Boucher

arrived at the convention. They had actually arrived in Perth the night before but waited until this morning to come over. They were unable to get a room at the All-Seasons Hotel so they stayed at a Hilton in the downtown area. We all had lunch at the All Seasons restaurant in the hotel.



We had dinner that evening at the Fishy Affair Restaurant with Stephen Boucher, Janice Gelb, and Perry Middlemiss. I had the Morton Bay Bugs which strongly resembled the face grabbing critter in the movie "Alien" that had a bad habit of using the human body as a womb for its young. I have

inserted a photo here to show my delightful dinner. The Morton Bay Bugs were tasty. We went back to the convention hotel for the fan fund auction. The time was changed from 7 to 8PM. Justin Ackroyd and John Robertson acted as the auctioneers and really have a fun schtick that they use together.

Two signed George R R Martin hardcover books were given to Justin for the auction. We had brought five US paperback books to read on the trip across the big water. The other materials we had brought for the DUFF auction were still in my suitcase which at this point was still stuck in Dallas. Much to my surprise, the five paperback books sold for a total of \$25.00AUD. The total



amount sold for the benefit of DUFF was \$203.00 AUD. It will stay in Australia for the next northbound DUFF fan fund winner. I was having a hard time staying awake during the auction so we went back to the Northbridge Hotel and turned in. Tomorrow we will have to go shopping to replace some of our clothing and toiletries which may or may not get to us while we are still in Australia.

\Saturday, March 22, 2008.

We got up early, had breakfast at the Northbridge Hotel and headed out to do some shopping. The walk downtown was more pleasant this time as I had some real shoes to wear. The shopping mall was two or three blocks long and had every kind of store one might want to find when that far away from home. When we returned to the hotel and put our new purchases away, Sue checked with Qantas Airlines to see if the luggage had arrived. The luggage was still somewhere in a black hole. The airline had provided us with a bit of money to replace some of our missing clothes until our bags could be found and delivered. We returned to the convention hotel and visited with different fans and trying to promote some interest in DUFF. We found that by sitting in the lobby area of the hotel we could meet and greet many people. There were people moving about constantly. We spoke to Edwina Harvey, the 2008 NAFF winner about her travel to Swancon. She said that she had won the fan fund trip by a margin of only twelve votes. She said it was a shame that more interest could not be generated for the fan funds that provided funds for travel inside of Australia.

After returning to the hotel and again checking with the airline (to no avail) the desk clerk told us about a convenience store about three blocks away. I went to the store to pick up some munchies and soft drinks to

keep in our room for times when we were not at the convention or out at a restaurant. Around the corner from our hotel I found a small bookstore in the middle of the block. For me a bookstore is like a powerful magnet. I went in for a quick look around and was impressed about the neatness of the store. Compared to stores like Borders and Books-a-Million it was quaint. I found the four Skylark books by Doc Smith in the British Panther edition and was very pleased with the purchase even though they cost \$20.00 for the set of four. Finding them in the US would require a stroke of good luck even in a convention Huckster's room.

We had dinner reservations for 7PM but were a little late getting started. Of the nine people who were to meet for dinner, only five were actually there. Perry, Stephen, Janice, Steve and myself. We had quite a walk that evening to the restaurant. I guess that we walked off some of our calories before we consumed them. James Street was the cultural and nightlife center of Perth. It was very active from the afternoon until late at night. You could find cuisine from many parts of the world. There were Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Italian, and Greek restaurants among others. Fast food places were available as well. We had dinner at an Italian restaurant tonight.

When we returned to the hotel, the Masquerade Ball was in progress. At Swancon, they do not judge the costumes on stage as we do in the US. They have a ball and the participants move about in costume. Many of the costumes were quite well done and unusual. Dr. Who fandom was certainly in evidence with the costumes being displayed at the ball. They had a Tardis complete with sound effects and flashing lights in the foyer of the hotel lobby. There was also a remote control Dalek roaming around the

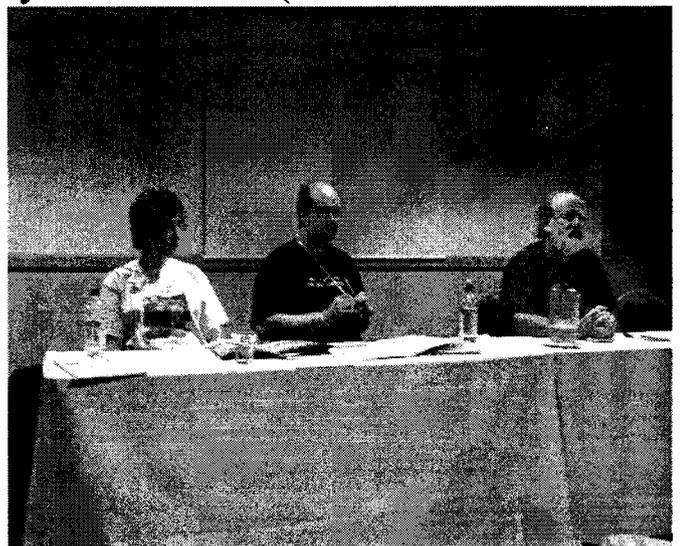


lobby area shouting “Exterminate-Exterminate!” We visited with people until about 12:30AM and then headed back to the hotel. We found Sue’s suitcase waiting for us when we got to our room. That was one down and one to go. Steve’s was still missing in action. With that we called it a night.

Sunday, March 23, 2008.

We went to the Tart café for breakfast and found several convention folks there. Justin and Perry had just finished eating and said hello as they left to return to the convention center. Roman Orszanski and his lady were there, along with another couple that we had met previously. They had internet at the café, but I had left my computer in the room. This café was only a half a block from the hotel and had a lovely garden behind the indoor part of the building. We had a panel at 2 pm about the cultural differences between fandom in the US and Australian Fans. We decided that there was not much difference in the fans as we all had common interests, but there were many differences in the way different committees ran their conventions. One notable difference between Swancon and a typical US convention was the placement of the dealer’s room. At Swancon, the dealer’s area was moved about each day as programming requirements dictated. In the US, moving the dealer’s room would have caused chaos and possibly a rebellion among the dealers themselves. Damien Warman, a lady from Ireland (we did not get her name), Steve and I were on the panel.

We stayed in the room after the panel and became part of the audience for the Australian in 2010 presentation. They pushed pre-supporting memberships and talked about when would be the best



time for Australian fans to become more involved in the bid. Many in the audience wanted to know when there would be more publicity about the convention in Australia. Perry reminded them that they had to win the bid before there would be a convention. The bid committee was taking the position that they would only have won the right to hold the 2010 Worldcon after the last votes were counted. At that point he reminded the audience about joining the Denver Worldcon as a supporting member so that they (the Australian fans) could vote in the site selection. He also explained that as a voter, one became a supporting member of Aussiecon 4 and obtained the right to receive all publications and all voting rights in the site selection for the 2012 Worldcon. Stephen Boucher briefly discussed the new site for the convention (if they win) would be across the river from the site of the Centra Hotel and Convention Center that was used in 1999 for Aussiecon 3.

Monday, March 24, 2008.

The next morning we walked down to James Street for a late breakfast. As we passed one restaurant, a familiar aroma assailed our sense of smell and we couldn't resist. It was a Subway located on the south side of the street. It would seem that the aroma of baking bread in the Subway stores is the same even if you are 10000 miles from home. Upon arriving back at the All-Seasons Hotel for the last day of the convention, we came across John Robertson and sat down for a chat. We suggested that he might consider running to become the 2009 DUFF representative from Australia and attend Anticipation in Montreal. He seemed to be quite interested but could not make any commitments then. We felt that he would make a good DUFF candidate because of his friendliness and outgoing personality. We explained to him that a good DUFF candidate must be financially responsible, be capable of raising funds for future DUFF winners, and must publish a trip report. Among

others we had met during the convention were Sue Isle and the Turner twins. We attended the convention's closing ceremonies and heard about upcoming conventions to be held later in Australia. Then one of the most amusing events to be held on the final day happened. Justin and John decided to hold a second DUFF auction for some of the items that we had packed in our carry-on luggage and in the suitcase that had arrived on Saturday. The suitcase with the rest of my clothes and the bulk of the items for the DUFF auction was still in limbo. Justin started the auction off with a Kentucky Derby Mint Julep glass. It quickly sold for \$50 to one of the convention's Guests of Honor after some spirited bidding against one of the other guests. We had brought two of the glasses, the second of which Justin kept hidden behind his back. After selling the first glass, Justin announced "I now have a second glass and I will start the bidding at \$50. Do I have any takers?" The other bidding guest snapped it up to a great round of applause. A bottle of Mint Julep mix (sans whiskey) sold for \$25. Then the auction became hilarious. Between John and Justin, they managed to auction off the bubble wrap that had been wrapped around the Julep mix and the two paper bags we had wrapped around the glasses to keep them from being broken in transit. Bidders insisted that the auctioneers sign one of the bags before they would bid on it. Also sold were a miniature deck of playing cards with a little green alien creature on the backs and a green alien bottle topper with a straw. Our thanks to Frank and Millie Kalisz for donating the items featuring the little green alien creatures. The total money raised in the auction was \$183AUD and combined with Friday's auction proceeds for a grand total of \$388. All of the money raised for DUFF will be sent to Norman Cates (the Australia/New Zealand DUFF administrator) for use by the 2009 DUFF winner for travel to Anticipation.

We received an invitation to attend the dead dog party at Davina Watson's house and had a chance to visit with people from the Perth area in a more relaxed atmosphere. Linda and Michael Deegan picked us up at the hotel and drove us to the party. Davina has a large home just made for parties. Her Grandson was celebrating his 18th birthday so she had a combined party. Many of the con committee and convention guests were also in attendance. Davina showed Glenda and Sue a few of the lovely quilts she had made and some that were still a work in progress. About 10PM Linda and Michael took us back to the hotel so we could get a good night's sleep before going to the airport for our flight to Sydney.



Tuesday, March 25, 2008.

We got up early, finished packing, caught a taxi and went to the airport. When we checked out of the hotel, they did not tell us that Steve's bag had arrived at 4AM and was stored behind the front desk. Unfortunately, we did not bother to ask if it was there. At the airport we again checked at the baggage counter and found out that they had sent it to the hotel earlier that morning. As we were two hours early, the baggage clerk offered to send a car to the hotel to retrieve the bag and return it to Qantas baggage and send it on to Sydney. When we arrived in Sydney, we finally had received the last of our luggage. After checking through the bag, nothing was damaged or missing. It only took seven days for it to catch up with us.

We then caught a taxi and had to make a detour to the international arrival part of the airport. I had accidentally left my wallet on the airplane from LA to Sydney. The taxi driver was very patient with us

(even as the fare was mounting up) and waited while I went inside and retrieved my wallet. Everything including the money was still inside. Our next stop was the Harbor Marriott Hotel located just two blocks from the harbor's edge. You could see the Sydney Harbor Bridge from our room, but not the Opera House. We decided to take a "short" nap and woke up the next morning. As the people we met at the convention who lived in Sydney had stayed over in Perth, we decided to do a little sight seeing on our own.

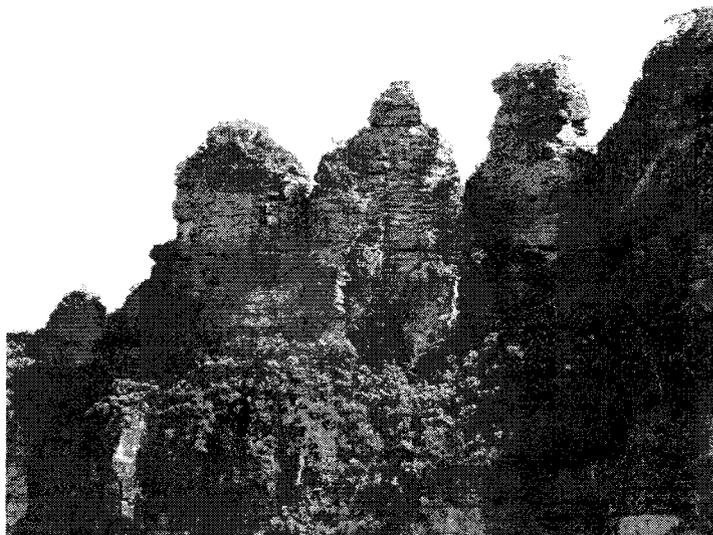
Wednesday, March 26, 2008.

We purchased two bus tickets for the Blue Mountains tour. After making



our way through a traffic jam in downtown Sydney we crossed the Harbor Bridge where we had a good view of the Opera (Not Opry) House. Our first stop was the Featherstone Wildlife Preserve where I got to scratch the belly of a real live Koala. It seems that all they like to do is

eat and sleep. Katoomba is a popular tourist destination where we rode the scenic railway down into Jamieson Valley. This railway is one of the steepest in the world and drops 230 meters into the valley. Here we saw the Sisters rock formation and heard the



legend of how they came about. We had lunch at the Katoomba Skyway restaurant and then made our obligatory tour of the gift shop. We boarded the bus for our return trip back to Sydney. About half way back to the city, we transferred to a ferry so as not to see the backside of everything we had seen on the way out. It was getting a bit cloudy but did not rain so we could enjoy the view from outside of the cabin. Our route took us under the bridge and within a few hundred yards of the Opera House. You cannot appreciate the size and grandeur of that building until you see it close up from the water. After a quick dinner near the ferry dock we returned to the hotel and put everything together for our flight to Hobart the next morning. It was a good feeling to have to lug ALL of our bags to the airport.

Thursday, March 27, 2008.

We had a quick breakfast and headed to the Sydney airport. The flight was short and uneventful. We were pleasantly surprised when we arrived at the Hobart airport and were met by Robin Johnson (the chairman of Aussiecon 1 in 1975) and his friend Cary Lenehan. Cary just happens to be a taxi driver, so we did not have to wait for a cab to get a ride to our hotel. We stayed at the Blue Hills Motel on Sandy Bay Road, which was located a short distance from Robin's home on Mona Street in Battery Point. The room was very small, but complete with all of the amenities. Unfortunately, the room was on the second floor of a hotel with no



elevator, so we had to lug the bags up a couple of flights of narrow stairs. After freshening up we met Robin and Alicia at their home and went to Shippy's Restaurant. Alicia had seafood chowder,

Robin had sheep's brains, Steve had a seafood selection and I had fish and chips. I probably should have had the seafood selection as it looked wonderful. We then walked over to Robin's house and had a nice chat and met Bertie, their dog. Robin and Alicia have a typical fannish home complete with hundreds of books, pictures and a lifetime of other memorabilia. We listened to the interview Robin had with a radio station about the passing Sir Arthur C. Clarke. The news of Sir Arthur's passing cast a bit of a pall over the day. Robin and Alicia live right next door to Colville Cottage, the bed and breakfast that was our home for four days during our first trip to Tasmania in 1999. Steve and I wandered back over to our hotel. We were quite upset when we found out from the desk clerk that we could not go to the Cadbury Chocolate factory just upriver from Hobart. They were closed the entire week after Easter while making chocolate for the holiday. I guess they were rather busy making enough chocolate for that Easter Bunny.

Friday, March 28, 2008.

We spent the next day walking around the downtown area and doing a little shopping. During our walkabout we passed by a very nice little bookshop about two blocks from our hotel. I returned a little later to see what might be found. This was the kind of bookshop that all fans dream about finding. I found a nice copy of an 1881 edition of Jules Verne's "Hector Servadac" priced at \$90AUD. I went back to the hotel to think about making the purchase. We had decided to ship some of our dirty clothes, extra shoes and books we had accumulated home rather than carry them about in our luggage. The cost was quite high for the postage on a box of that size, but we needed the extra room for the items we would buy at the Salamanca Market on Saturday. After dropping the box at the post office, we got ready for dinner that evening.

We met with Robin at his home before walking over to the restaurant. Alicia was not feeling well so she elected to remain home for the evening. Dinner was held at the 1815 Restaurant just two blocks away from Robin's place. It was called Mummy's when we were here in 1999 and specialized in desserts much like one of our own pie shops in Louisville. At the restaurant, Robin had arranged at table for us and several of his friends who lived in the area. There was Cary and



Marjorie Lenehan, Julie and Michael O'Brien who were brother and sister, Robin, and us. We have no clue as to what we ordered for dinner that evening, so please don't ask. After dinner and much pleasant conversation we adjourned to Robin's house for some more conversation and

good company. Alicia was feeling a bit better and joined us in the parlor with Bertie. After a couple of hours the group broke up and we said our good byes, Cary dropped us off at our hotel for a good night's sleep. We had done a lot of walking that day and planned a lot more for Saturday.

Saturday, March 29, 2008.

Saturday is the day that the Salamanca Market is set up along Salamanca Street between 8AM and 3PM. The market is about a kilometer long between the park and a row of old warehouses near the docks that have been converted into shops and restaurants. The market offers every thing one would want or expect to find at a combination farmer's market and flea market. We wandered up and back through the aisles looking for gifts for friends and anything we might bring back to the US for future DUFF auctions. We bought a couple of caps with a "Fishing in

Tasmania” logo on them for our friends Richard and Lois Wellinghurst. We also found quite a few items for the auctions. It was amazing how fast the market was taken down at the end of the day. Hardly a trace remained to show that anyone had even been there. We also planned to go to the Victoria Market in Melbourne later on in our travels. After we returned to the hotel, Sue took a nap and I went back to the bookstore. It was very unlikely that I would find another copy of this Jules Verne book in the US, so I decided to go ahead and buy it. This book fit in so well with the dozen very old Verne books in my collection. Fortunately, the owner agreed to reduce his price a bit, so I got it for \$80AUD. I also found a copy of one of Sax Rohmer’s Sumuru books in the UK edition, but at \$175 it was too much to spend in addition to the Verne book. We had an early dinner at a small neighborhood café located on the street between our hotel and Robin’s house. We returned to the hotel and went down for the count. Hobart is quite hilly and will wear out a couple of 65 plus folks from the other side of the world.

Sunday, March 30, 2008.

After breakfast Steve walked me to a Baptist church we had found the previous day during our wanderings and then he went on to Robin’s house. The pastor of the church was very welcoming and reminded me a lot of Donnie (the minister of my church in Louisville). It was almost like being home on Sunday morning. After church I went on outside and started back up the street toward the road that went over to Robin’s house. I met Steve, Robin and Bertie coming along to meet me. We walked back to the hotel to wait for our taxi. When it picked us up, Robin headed home. We had a flight to Adelaide with a stop in Melbourne. We got off temporarily and then got back on the same plane to continue on to Adelaide. When we arrived Damien was waiting for us with his car. After retrieving the bags and loading them into his car he

gave us an introduction to AdelaiMide pointing out information about his city. When we got to his home, Juliette was preparing dinner when we got here. We talked for awhile about books, Swancon, our traveling misadventures and meeting many new fans. Steve told Juliette that I loved the gingerbread on the houses so she told me to check out their living room ceiling. I was in awe. I have not seen a ceiling done that way before. It was beautiful. The only way to describe it was a wonderful sculpture in plaster.

Monday, March 31, 2008.

Damien and Juliette were both working on Monday so they gave us bus instructions on how to get to different places in town. They did not tell us we had to wave at the driver to get him to stop for us but he stopped for us any way. It is possible that we missed that they told us to wave at the driver. We went to the downtown mall for some shopping and then walked over to the botanical gardens. I loved the roses, mums, and the myriad varieties of flowers and plants. The gardens were immense and



superbly well kept. The day spent at the gardens gave us a chance to relax and enjoy the beautiful colors. We caught the right bus back to Damien and Juliette's house and let us off just one house away. At home when I was still working at the library I had to either get Steve to

drive me to the bus stop in the morning or walk about 1½ miles to catch the bus. This evening there will be a group of fans coming over to the house at about 7:30PM. people started arriving, Dianne DeBellis, Yvonne Rousseau, Roman Orszanski, Alison Barton, Medge and Bean. One of Juliette's friends (Emily) was not able to attend but sent a

wonderful Brioche with custard and fruit. It was delicious. We had a great time swapping tales and telling con stories. After everyone left we talked a while longer with Damien and Juliette before turning in for the night. The next day was going to be a busy day.

Tuesday, April 1, 2008.

We got up early, because Juliette had to be at a business conference at 8AM. Damien then took us on to the airport so he could get to work on time. We had an uneventful flight into Melbourne and were greeted by Justin Ackroyd (the keeper of the house keys). He had told us that he would meet us at the airport, and pass the keys to Lucy Sussex and Julian Warner's house where we would be staying while we were in Melbourne. Lucy and Julian were in New Zealand for the wedding of a family member and to attend the New Zealand National Convention. He told us that his wife Jenny was out circling the terminal road while we gathered up our bags at the carousel. She had to circle the loop seven times before we came out. They drove us to Julian and Lucy's home in Brunswick, a suburb of Melbourne. Julian had previously sent us a lengthy e-mail note describing the care and feeding of both the house and the cats resident therein. We unloaded the bags, showed Justin the items we had brought



with us for the DUFF auction and then went out for lunch. We had decided to leave all of the DUFF auction items with Julian and Lucy to be sold at future conventions. After lunch Justin took us to the Melbourne Zoo. There had been many changes at the zoo since we had been here



in 1999. We loved the butterfly exhibit. By the time we had finished touring the exhibits at the zoo, we ready for a break. Justin took us back to Julian and Lucy's house and we told him to thank his wife Jenny for sharing him with us. As it was their wedding anniversary, they were not going join us that evening at the Villa Romana for dinner.

That evening after resting a while, Rose picked us up to take us to the Villa Romana restaurant. We had to walk past several other restaurants on our way to the Villa Romana where there were hawkers on the sidewalks trying to get people to come into their restaurants. Rose led us past them and just waved them all away, saying "We have reservations elsewhere". It was a very wonderful Italian restaurant. There were 15 people there in our group. Sitting across from us was Bruce Gillespie, Terry Frost (DUFF 1998), and Rose Mitchell. Rose did a lot of table hopping that evening. Also present were Perry Middlemiss (DUFF 1996), his wife Robin Mills, Alan Stewart (DUFF 1994), Janice Gelb (DUFF 1999), Stephen Boucher, Andrew Macrae, Sue Ann Barber, Trevor Clarke, Barbara Hope, and Irwin Hirsh (GUFF). After dinner some of us went up the street to Brunetti's for dessert. Steve and I shared a dessert as we were very full from dinner. But then who can pass up dessert.



Wednesday, April 2, 2008.

We slept in late this morning. Steve walked down to a produce market on Sydney Road and brought back some fruit for breakfast. Afterwards we did some laundry and hung the clothes out on the line. I had forgotten how great clothes smell when they have been dried outside. Steve and I went for a walk around the Brunswick area on Sydney road.

We walked about a mile enjoying looking in shop windows. Steve saw a beautiful inlaid game table that he was interested in. The price was \$500AUD which was not unreasonable for a piece of that quality, but it would have cost more than that to have it shipped back to the US. The winds had really picked up and there was quite a bit of dust blowing around. Some of it actually found its way into my eyes past my glasses. The winds became stronger and it then began to rain. We were really glad we had not decided to go sight seeing. It rained quite heavily for a while and knocked out the power. Steve was going next door to see if the lights were out all over the neighborhood or just at Julian's when he heard the neighbor telling someone else that the outage had been reported. After the rain stopped, we washed a second load of clothes and hung them out to dry. The wind came up again and was whipping the clothes around violently. A little later we went out to see if they were dry. They were and we started to take them down before it began to rain again. We found a skirt up in a bush at the side of the yard and were missing a pair of Steve's underwear from the load. We must assume that one of the neighbors found an unusual surprise in their back yard. We learned later that the tail end of a cyclone had hit the Melbourne area.

Unfortunately Rose got soaked on her way home from work and had to completely change clothes before coming over to pick us up for dinner. When Rose arrived we asked her if she had also lost power. She was unaware that her power might have been out as it was still light enough when she arrived home. Since she was in a hurry to pick us up, she just dried off, changed clothes and came over to the house. Tonight we went to the Peacock Inn in Northcote for dinner before going to the Nova Mob club meeting. We were joined for dinner by Bruce Barnes, Clare MacDonald, Justin Ackroyd, Jenny Ackroyd, Lucy Ackroyd, Peter Fagan, Janice Gelb, Rose Mitchell, Jane Routley, and Rebecca Lochsley. The Peacock Inn was a very nice pub style restaurant and we had some

very nice conversations with everyone there. We then went on the Nova Mob club meeting which was held in a library meeting room.

Among the people in attendance were Justin Ackroyd, Rose Mitchell, Janice Gelb, Bill Wright and 14 or 15 others from the Melbourne area. Justin introduced us to the group and asked us to give them some personal background and a little about what we had done in fandom over the years. Little did we know that we were to be the speakers for the evening so we had not prepared any kind of talk. We began by giving a brief description of our fannish history. One of the people to our left asked us how many conventions we had attended over the years. I replied "331 and Sue has been to 301". He then said "That's more conventions than everyone here in this room combined has attended!" We answered a few more questions from the audience, then we asked if they would like to hear some convention related stories from the US.

Several people eagerly answered that they would. Sue started off with the story of her first Kubla Khan in Nashville in 1975. Since we had the children with us, she thought it best to have the room next to the consuite so we could hear the kids if they woke up during the night. Never again! We told of a few more amusing incidents then I told the "Kerry Gilley" story from the 1989 Xanadu, also in Nashville. After finishing with that tale, Sue poked me in the arm and said "TELL THAT STORY". I said "Which one are you talking about?" She said "You know, THAT story about the front lawn." To which I replied "I really don't think I should tell that one here." By this time, the group had picked up on our little back and forth and insisted on hearing it. So I told the story of the hotel manager's front lawn at 3AM. By the time everyone stopped laughing, it was closing time for the library and we had to end the meeting. After saying goodbye to everyone, Rose took us back to Julian's house. We had a busy day planned before we headed

back home. As a side note, after we returned home we received highly complimentary e-mail from Bill Wright describing our telling of con stories as a “veritable Tour de Force”.

Thursday, April 3, 2008.

Our first order of business for the day was to ride the tram into town for a bit of shopping at Melbourne’s Victoria Market. Much like the Salamanca Market in Hobart, it is a combination farmer’s and flea market with hundreds of vendors selling every imaginable kind of merchandise. This market was much larger and was set up on a permanent basis. We were looking for gifts for the family and items that we could take to conventions to auction off for the DUFF account to help send someone from North America to Aussiecon 4 in 2010. We purchased many Australia themed items such as shirts with aboriginal art, miniature boomerangs, place mats with Australian images and assorted knick-knacks that we hoped might bring a good return. We found that we had to inspect each item we bought for a label that read “Made in Australia” since so many souvenirs are actually made in China.

Once we purchased about all that we could carry, we met Perry Middlemiss a few blocks away from the market and went to lunch. He had a favorite Chinese food restaurant that was close by. This restaurant was on the second floor above a store front and served Chinese Dim Sum. The server brought each food selection to the table on a cart. Other selections were brought to your table on separate carts for you to choose from. After lunch, Perry had to leave us for an appointment, so we went off to an art gallery that Janice had told us about. We wandered through the art gallery for about an hour, then had a seat in the lobby to wait for Janice to arrive.

Janice met us in the lobby of the art gallery and suggested that we go over the main branch of the Melbourne Library to see an extraordinary exhibit on display there. The display featured dozens of hand written 15th and 16th century religious manuscripts and individual pages. They were meticulously written and illustrated in beautiful colors by monks who spent thousands of hours creating them. Our dinner was quite mundane in that we ate at a food court in a mall. After a nice long conversation, we caught the tram back to Brunswick and Julian's house to pack for our flight back across the big water.

Friday, April 4, 2008.

Upon arriving at the airport, we weighed our carry on bags to make sure they did not exceed the seven kilogram weight limit. After some bit of repacking, we checked in at the Qantas counter and settled in to wait to board our flight. As usual one of us had to take a center seat for the 14 hour flight. Fortunately, the third person in our row was a small woman who slept most of the way. The selection of in flight movies was rather lackluster, so we also slept most of the way also. We landed at LAX, went quickly through customs without incident, and rechecked our bags for the flight to Chicago and on to Louisville. Our departure gate was located in a stand alone terminal building that required a short shuttle bus trip to get there. We arrived at the gate with about a half hour to spare and presented our boarding passes to the gate clerk. When the first of our boarding passes went through the card reader, it went BING-BING-BING! We asked what the problem was and the gate clerk said in a not so reassuring tone of voice that Qantas, in all their great and wonderful wisdom, had cancelled our reservations because they thought that we could not pass through customs and security in the time we had between flights.

I protested that not only were we here, but that we were at least a half hour early and the plane was still sitting on the tarmac with the door still open. I then asked “Why are we not on that plane as we have valid boarding passes?” The clerk said that they had already boarded some standby passengers, but that there was still one empty seat left. All of our protests were to no avail, so I told Sue to go ahead and take the last seat before something else went wrong. She wanted me to take it because by this time I was becoming very grumpy. I told her no because I was much more used to hanging around airports waiting for missed and delayed flights. As I watched her board, I had this very lost feeling and wondered if I was ever going to get home. In our opinion, American Airlines had performed in a manner that could be considered somewhat less than sterling. This on top of the delayed luggage and the cancelled reservation was not going to cause me to go out of my way to fly on American again anytime soon. I sent American Airlines a scathing letter through their online customer service system and was rewarded with a paltry \$200 flight voucher for a future trip. I let our daughter, Laura use it when we flew her out to California during our Worldcon driving trip to Denver, so she could be with us when we subsequently visited my brothers and sister in Chico.

The gate clerk rebooked me on a standby flight at 1PM and a confirmed flight at 2PM. I had about three hours before the first flight out to Chicago, so I went back to the main terminal and out through security to lodge a complaint with Qantas about their high handed handling of our reservations. There was no one at the Qantas counter to talk to which did nothing to improve my frame of mind. It seems that they only have people on duty when there arriving or departing flights. At that point I gave up and caught the shuttle back to the AA terminal building and waited. Maybe my luck was changing finally when I heard my name called for the earlier standby flight. I boarded and found myself seated

way in the back of the cabin with two AA pilots who were returning to Chicago. They were very friendly and we swapped several airline stories to pass the time. By comparison, the 3-1/2 hour flight to Chicago was a short one indeed. I made my connection at a very empty O'Hare and arrived in Louisville a little after 11PM. I called Sue from a pay phone to come to the airport to pick me up. I was still not used to carrying a cell phone and didn't really want to. When I did have it with me it was under protest. It seems that my cell phone was still in her carry on bag so I couldn't call her from Chicago to give her my arrival time. In spite of all of the trials and tribulations, we are still planning to go to New Zealand and Australia in 2010 to attend Aussiecon 4. One last note, all of our luggage made it home with Sue.

Interim DUFF financial statement through April 1, 2009

INCOME: Pass along funds from previous DUFF delegates.	\$11421
Donations:	\$311
Auction and Trip Report Sales:	\$2345
Bank Interest on Account:	\$44
Total Income:	\$14121
EXPENSES: Airfare to, inside and from Australia:	\$6593
Hotels, Taxi Fares and Miscellaneous:	\$1362
Purchases for Future Fund Raising Auctions:	\$247
Total Expenses:	\$8202
BALANCE:	\$5919

Sue and Steve Francis April 1, 2009

