

# FUCK THE TORIES

Number One

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FUCK THE TORIES is published by Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown (PO Box 433, Civic Square, ACT 2608, AUSTRALIA), Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna (22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, UNITED KINGDOM), and Terry Hughes (6205 Wilson Blvd., #102, Falls Church, VA 22044, UNITED STATES) on what passes in fandom as a frequent schedule. Issues are edited with the strictest adherence to the highest principles of scientific socialism and in the order indicated by the mystical method of continental rotation, namely #1 North America, #2 Europe, #3 Australia, #4 North America, etc. This fanzine is available only by editorial whim and cannot be purchased with the contaminated currencies of capitalist regimes. Our collective whim, however, can be influenced by contributions of material (Act fast and get your Fellow Traveler certificate!), letters of comment (Please bear in mind that it is better to be concise than verbose, except when praising the work of the editor to whom the letter is addressed. Feel free to write to the editor of your choice since copies of all locs will be circulated among the five of us.), fanzines sent in trade (Copies must go to all three households, but you probably already do this anyway.), and friendly acts. Contents ©1985 by the editors and all rights are hereby returned to the respective contributors. DO NOT USE THIS FANZINE IN CASE OF FIRE OR ELECTRICAL EMERGENCY, INSTEAD GO TO NEAREST DESIGNATED EXIT.

# FAQR WARNING

Comrade T Hughes

Some of the more astute among you may infer a certain political bias from the title of this fanzine. I want to hasten to assure you that this most decidedly is the case.

When Queen Elizabeth last visited San Francisco her yacht was granted an exemption from the sewage regulations that all other craft in the San Francisco Bay were subject to. Evidently the powers that be tried to convince the citizens that royal fecal matter didn't stink (or pollute). In response a group of SF residents presented Her Majesty with a fur-lined toilet seat as a gift. FUCK THE TORIES can be considered a similar gift toilet set to fandom's proponents of globalized hegemonization who would be well advised to search the fur for barbed wire before sitting down.

This is a truly international fanzine with the five of us overseeing the simultaneous publication of each issue in America, Australia and Britain. FTT is really the brainchild of Leigh Edmonds who first proposed that we do a joint fanzine while Joseph Nicholas (popularizer of the term "globalized hegemonization") came up with the title and together with Judith Hanna and Valma Brown they fleshed out the initial concept. As I recall my contribution was suggesting that we use staples along the left-hand side of the fanzine. Leigh was inspired by reports he'd heard about Rob Hansen and Ted White planning to do a trans-Atlantic fanzine so those two deserve a salute even though we had worked out our own ground rules in Melbourne well before the first issue of Crank came into being. In keeping with traditional attitudes towards international relations we divided the world into spheres of influence. I handle the distribution in North America, Judith and Joseph have Europe, and Valma and Leigh take care of Australia, New Zealand and anything else that floats.

Our first act as a cadre was the publication of a bogus issue of the Aussiecon 2 Free Press which reviewed the Hugo presentations from a politically correct viewpoint. This was prepared immediately after the ceremonies and distributed that same night. If you were at the worldcon, you undoubtedly got a copy; if you weren't, you may have seen the quote from it in File 770.

[Incidentally one of the more pleasant aspects of distributing that newsletter was exchanging sheets of paper with a Canadian fan who went on his way before I could catch sight of his name badge. His sheet turned out to be for the Myles Bos' House for Worldcon '89 bid and it contained such appealing comments as: "No longer does Fandom have to endure long, tiring trips to the most expensive cities on the planet. No longer does Fandom have to learn the native customs of a foreign land. No longer will Worldcon be privy only to the few rich capitalists who break the backs of the working class to further their materialistic pleasures. Worldcon is for the people, and we intend to return it to its humble roots." and "The site of Worldcon '89 will be a nuclear free zone." Neither Myles Bos or Robert Gunderson (the two credited with the responsibility for the flyer) were listed in the worldcon handbook so I don't know which of them was handing it out (or if it was someone else altogether) but they've both been placed on FTT's mailing list and I hope they clarify the matter. It's good to see this kind of fanac coming from Canada in spite of (or maybe because of) the Conservatives controlling the government there. This may turn out to be the best hoax bid since Stu Shiffman's Flushing bid.]

What we're trying to do with FTT is to have fun while offering an alternative to the reactionary conservatism which is slithering into view in several of today's fanzines. We are not calling for the violent overthrow of any particular government (at least not this issue) nor are we claiming FTT to be the most politically correct fanzine since the days of the Michelism (particularly since we haven't read any of the Michelist fanzines). We are encouraging you not only to question authority but also to laugh at it. Do something.

The oppressive rightwingers always find something to do. A few years ago Margaret Thatcher's popularity was in a nosedive so she sent British troops to invade the Falkland Islands and her party won the next elections. Ronald Reagan found himself in a similar situation so he followed her lead and sent American troops to invade Grenada and subsequently he got re-elected. Around this same time Malcolm Fraser was watching his popularity plummet but he failed to find an island to invade so his party got tossed out. No doubt if he'd accused drunken New Zealand tourists of seizing control of Norfolk Island and sent in Australian troops to restore order, Fraser would still be prime minister today. As it stands now Maggie has to hold elections by 1988, the same year as the US presidential election, while Ronnie is strongly hinting that US presidents should be allowed to serve more than two terms. So I wouldn't recommend moving to a small island until after these elections are over.

In addition to alerting you to our political slant and giving you a small island advisory, I want to warn you about something closer to your fannish hearts: staples. Yes, staples.

Personally I never used to worry about staples, except for a nagging feeling that there ought to be some way to fit used ones back into the stapler. This all changed when I went to a certain party several months ago. It was a joint birthday party for Lynn Steffan (Dan Steffan's wife) and another woman (who is not Dan Steffan's wife) and as such it was attended by a diverse mixture of people, many of whom I had not met previously. This naturally involved a lot of introductions and exchanges of information. I was having a good time until one guy asked me what I did for a living. This is a question I really hate since I cannot give an impressive answer like saying I'm a starving artist, writer, musician or poet. So I mumbled the truth, that I was a well-fed computer-flavored bureaucrat who works for a financial equivalent of the UN. I put the same question to him fully expecting to hear that he was an actor or a disk jockey.

"Oh, I work for the NRC."

"The Nuclear Regulatory Commission?" He nodded his head and a broad smile spread across my face. I said, "I'm thrilled to meet someone at a party who works for a more socially embarrassing organization that I do. Let me shake your hand." He looked slightly bewildered but shook my hand.

"Just what do you do at the NRC?"

"I work in Waste Management."

"You handle radioactive waste?" I looked down at my hand to see if there was a telltale glow. All I noticed was that it was trembling quite a bit.

He gave me a smile that was meant to be reassuring and said, "Don't worry. I don't handle the stuff -- I work in the planning end of waste disposal."

"You mean you design ways for other people to handle radioactive waste?"

"Um, well, yes, you could put it that way." Now it was his turn to look at his hand as if he wanted to wash it.

Since at that time the newspapers were full of stories about how radioactively contaminated materials such as metal were being dumped in third world countries like Mexico where they were made into chairs and tables and so forth and being sold back to the US at cheap prices, I decided to ask him about it. "Was the Mexican table strategy one of the ones you came up with?"

"No, but we were talking about it during coffee break at work yesterday. There were six of us sitting around a table designed for four so that four of the six had to sit with their legs straddling the metal table legs." He paused to let me get a clear mental picture, then he proceeded, "One of the guys -- one who was sitting in the middle -- brought up the matter of the contaminated Mexican tables. He said that they were serving a dual purpose: disposing of radioactive waste and controlling population growth through sterilization."

"I bet that was a shorter than normal coffee break."

"Of course tables aren't the only thing to worry about. That contaminated metal could come back in any form from automobiles to office supplies like staples."

"Staples?"

"Sure. Why not?"

Why not indeed. I just hope that you've been wearing your lead-lined underwear while reading this fanzine.

+ Terry Hughes +

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This fanzine enthusiastically endorses the following candidacies:

JUDITH HANNA for TAFF!

VALMA BROWN for GUFF!

Ballots will be distributed when they are available. Do yourself and fandom a favor and vote for Judith and Valma.

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Since this fanzine was conceived during the swirl of events that made up Aussiecon Two, it is only natural for that worldcon to receive some consideration. Here then are some views of Aussiecon Two from different vantage points...

# AUSSIECON II - AN EXPERIENCE

Leanne Frahm

In February this year one thousand power industry workers went on strike in protest at the South East Queensland Electricity Board's granting of work to outside private contractors. The Government promptly sacked them. This led to a prolonged power strike and intermittent general strikes and blockades as the year progressed towards Aussiecon II. In an eerily prophetic letter to Richard Faulder dated 14 July 1985 I wrote, "The Qld unions are making loud noises about further more definite action over the power dispute, and I know they'll start a plane strike in August."

I was booked on a flight from Mackay to Melbourne on Wednesday, 21 August. At the beginning of that month the Trades and Labour Council announced a general stop-work meeting scheduled for Tuesday, the 20th, to discuss the possibility of instigating another general strike. I panicked, and changed my flight to the Monday. This worried me, though. A non-assertiveness-trained wife and mother carries a burden of remorse at the prospect of deserting her family for a week, a burden doubled by the realisation that the prospect also delighted her. The addition of a few extra days of irresponsibility increased my feelings of guilt to almost psychotic levels. This, together with my already-voiced apprehension of attending something as unfamiliar and unknown, and hence as scary, as a Worldcon, led me to consider dropping the whole project.

Kerry sought to reassure me. "Look," he said, "you deserve a holiday. Look at it that way. You can sleep in as late as you want to, go where you want, do what you want. No housework, no scurrying after other people. You'll love it."

Ha. Ha bloody ha.

In an exuberance of enthusiasm I acceded to a request to be what we euphemistically terms a "den-mother" to the (as it was described to me) "main members of the con committee". Carey Handfield wrote to me detailing the job on 19 December, 1984. The job involved "running the con suite, seeing food is available, and that people have a place to rest." Carey also pointed out that as the committee suite would be running most of the con, there would be a "number of people" involved in running the room. "Obviously," he concluded, "we are not asking you to spend all your time working in the suite, we would just like your help in running it."

Fine, as they say, in theory. Despite some exposure to fans' incredible ability to extract chaos from order at a few Natcons, I was still naive enough to believe that a Worldcon Committee was capable of putting theory into practice, albeit perhaps on a limited scale. I was yet to appreciate that the lower level on any scale is zero; after that, you're into the negatives, and that's horrendous.

So, flattered by Carey's letter -- in that the committee would entrust to me the overseeing of such a vital function in the complexity of a Worldcon -- I joyfully accepted the charge he described.

Only it turned not to be a bit like that.

By the time I arrived to register on Wednesday night, the "number of people" helping had dwindled to the person of Cathy Kerrigan. There would be just the two of us to run the room. Oh. There was also no question of sleeping in -- I was to be present at the 8am meeting of the committee every morning. Oh again. (I eventually discarded this practice as contributing nothing to my job. As it followed a late-night meeting every evening, it was as much a chance for the committee to charge hot breakfasts to the con's account as anything else.)

And it soon became apparent that owing to the serious undermanning of departments, no committee members could be coaxed to leave their positions for even five minutes, so the job transformed itself on Thursday from the imagined rather elegant hostessing of the con suite to a rabid scurrying after other people -- and where had I heard that phrase before?

Thursday was the worst day. An available urn had been forgotten, and was not forthcoming until Friday, so dozens and dozens of cups of tea and coffee had to rely on two hotel jugs for hot water. The con suite was three floors above the mezzanine where all the action was, so everything had to be carted on trays up and down the lifts as the enfeebled jugs belched forth boiling water at a slow rate of knots. Sandwiches had to be made and fetched down. The "main members of the con committee" whom Cathy and I were to nourish quickly came to include anyone who looked busy and wanted sustenance. I look back on Thursday now as some sort of nightmare, of scurrying up and down lifts that answered summonses as slowly as headwaiters at pretentious restaurants, of running back and forth through corridors that cunningly lengthened as the day wore on, of helping on various tables, of feeling a stultifying weariness creeping on, and worst of all, the panicky sensation that a Worldcon was happening, and I was seeing none of it.

At 9pm that night, after an 8am start, I retired to my room at the Victoria with a hamburger, my first food since breakfast. At 3am I was vomiting its remains into the toilet. I'm not very good with stress.

Friday was better. My pleas for the urn were finally acknowledged, and I determined to cut out the scurrying by working from the registration room. The committee was not happy with that -- the hotel, intent on selling its own provender, might object to overt competition. A compromise was reached, which cut out half the running. We would work from screened tables in the registration room, but the urn would stay in the con suite. Hot water would be ferried in large hot-pots, not, thank god, the jugs. From this position, Cathy and I were able to establish at least some sort of a routine. We were still occupied most of the day with morning teas, lunches, afternoon teas, the fetching of hot food from outside cafes for people who couldn't get away, and appointments to the various panels we were on, but we were saved from complete exhaustion. Certainly there were moments of relaxation, but these were often times that never coincided with programme items I wanted to see, and I mostly spent them smoking in the foyer and chatting to passers-by.

Saturday and Sunday passed in the same manner -- Sunday differing only in that Cathy was busy with other things that day, so I tended my task alone. I found it could be handled by one person, although the smokes were fewer, so I suggested to Cathy that in return I would have Monday off, and see at least the final offerings of the con.

I had, therefore, more time for reflection over those next days, and with

reflection, came resentment. Attending Aussiecon cost me \$800 -- more if you count a couple of restaurant meals and souvenirs for the relatives at home. That was \$800 taken from the family coffers for me to see a Worldcon; I was not seeing a Worldcon. I was, in fact, drudging, something I can do equally competently and with far less strain at home.

Well, then, the cynic might ask, why'd you do it? Why not just walk out and enjoy yourself? The answer is that I have this serious character flaw -- a dedication to responsibility. It could have been that had I pulled the pin (as we say in the tropics) Cathy would have been left to try to run it by herself, which would have been unfair to her. And then if she had followed my example and left, some nice people would have been inconvenienced by the lack of the service we were providing. Again unfair, and it's just not in me to be deliberately unfair. And I'm also starry-eyed and idealistic enough to believe that if Aussiecon had succeeded as a great Worldcon, or even a really good one, I might have found my resentment tempered by a sort of jingoistic pride. Unhappily, I'm yet to be convinced that it was a great Worldcon, or even a fairly good one. I have a profound suspicion that it was a bad one.

After attending Eurekacon last year, I wrote "If the organizers of the 23rd National Science Fiction Convention were truly serious in their claim that Eurekacon was to be a practise run for Aussiecon II, then they were either deluding themselves and/or the rest of fandom; or operating in a different temporal/spatial concept from the rest of the world; or Aussiecon II is going to be the biggest balls-up since the Big Bang." I'm left wondering after the event if my last surmise wasn't the correct one -- perhaps with the exchange of "whimper" for "bang".

The core of the problem seemed to consist of two factors. Firstly, the con was run with such a lack of man-power that it's hard to imagine why the bid ever went in. A small number of people worked themselves off their feet; their dedication was awesome, but even with the commandeering of the services of a large number of visitors, things tended to be forgotten or ignored, or left for a last-minute rush.

Secondly, and more importantly, there was apparently no one with a grasp of the overall concept of the con to make extempore decisions quickly and efficiently. Often no one knew (and in some cases didn't care to know) to whom a particular problem or question should be referred. Consequently, in the heat of the moment, some plainly bad decisions were made.

Another flaw that I took exception to was the lack of courtesy shown to visitors. A lot of people paid much more than I did to attend Aussiecon II, yet not even the welcome of a restaurant guide to Melbourne was extended to them! A small thing, but surely an important one that should have been thought of beforehand.

I could go on listing such things as the poor opening ceremony (which was repeated under the guise of a closing ceremony), the even poorer Hugo presentation (made all the more risible by David Grigg's explanation for the more-than-an-hours delay that Aussiecon was going to do "something spectacular" with it) -- but I find I've little energy for that. Others will doubtless investigate such details later. My overall impression of the con is summed up by the fact that as Aussicon ended, the only emotion I felt was relief, so different from other cons that almost broke my heart as they concluded.

John Bangsund tells me that my mood is coloured because I was so close to the heart of the con and saw the difficulties first-hand. The ordinary con-goer, he assured me, probably had a great time and enjoyed it immensely. I hope so. I know Marty Cantor had a wonderful time -- he told me so. Still, there's a world of difference between a Fan GoH who's so BNF he can smoke all over Christine Ashby without remonstrance and the average con-goer. The only reaction I received from a visitor came from a woman who was startlingly forthright in her condemnation of Aussiecon as a Worldcon, or indeed as any sort of con at all. I cringe to think her attitude may be universal. On the other hand, she comes from Kalamazoo; maybe they're used to something different there.

On rereading what I've written so far, I find it reflects my mood exactly as the con progressed, from the eager excitement of the beginning to the bathos of my trailing dismally home. And although I've selected extracts from Carey's letter, I most definitely do not blame any particular person for my lack of enjoyment of the con. If anything, I blame my own gullibility in believing that my job at the con would go the way it was planned; experience with the real running of cons would have made me more wary.

The only thing I would add is that the gloom of the con was lightened intermittently for me by some pretty wonderful people, some involved in running the con, some not, whose support and affection were greatly appreciated. You know who you are. I thank you, and love you all.

+ Leanne Frahm +

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## EDITORIAL EDDITION

Comrade L Edmonds

Like Leanne, the only thing that made Aussiecon II survivable for me was the company of a few people. Had it not been for the presence of Judith Hanna, Joseph Nicholas, Terry Hughes, Grant Stone and the lovely Valma Brown I would probably have just walked out of my cavern in the depths of the Victoria Hotel where the newsletter was being produced, and not bothered to go back -- to work or to the convention. There were two occasions when I just quit what I was doing and went for a walk to diminish some of the stress... I get quite enough of it at work that I don't need an overload of it in my hobby as well. It would have been just so easy to go and see a film or two or maybe catch a train out to Moonee Ponds and look at the model shop, or go and visit some relatives or non-fannish friends. But I suppose I didn't do so because I have the same kinds of character flaws as Leanne. This was made more difficult for me because I was not even aware if anybody really would mind if I didn't go ahead and produce the newsletter.

The main feeling that some people have of Aussiecon II is that it swallowed us up, subjected us to pressures and levels of hard work that we didn't need, and then spat us out at the end with hardly a comment on the efforts we had put in. Not that a thousand words of praise would make up for the fact that



I spent endless hours sitting in front of this screen with my fingers tapping away on this keyboard, something I can do any day in much more comfort and with no real deadline pressure, when the biggest fannish event in Australia in ten years was not going on somewhere else and almost totally passing me by. (The amount of work involved in publishing the newsletters is reflected in the following little statistic: I produced the newsletter for Aussiecon back in 1975 and it took but eight pages over the entire event -- for Aussiecon II in 1985 I produced thirty-one pages in about the same period of time, as well as the seven pages of text that the computer lost on me.) By Saturday evening I was feeling very neglected and resentful about the whole exercise. This was not helped when I sought, in passing, a little sympathy from the committee, only to be told "You did volunteer".

Not that most committee members involved in trying to run the convention didn't have too many of their own problems. All the same, the main convention organizers did not provide for their workers in the Victoria Hotel the kind of support structure that they laid on for themselves. I normally worked on the newsletter from 6am until after noon, sometimes all day and on a couple of occasions halfway through the night (and when that was done there were other jobs that had to be done as well), but the only person who took the time to see if I hadn't starved to death was Valma, and she has a vested interest. This was highlighted when nobody in the Southern Cross bothered to tell us in the Victoria that -- despite prior suggestions -- there was going to be a shortage of banquet tickets and that we'd have to get in and buy them quick... thus meaning that when we heard about it, it was all too late. That we did not get to see the Bob Shaw speech was bad enough, but being made to feel that we had no place in the scheme of things, unless we complained (and who had time to complain), was what really hurt.

Come the Monday I was really interested in only one thing: getting out of the convention as quickly as I could and trying to forget about the whole thing. No doubt others felt similarly.

Never again!

+ Leigh Edmonds +

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## ON BEING PISSED OFF

Comrade V Brown

Today Leigh is off at the National Library and I am left on my own to contemplate the world, but really to see if I can manage the washing since it is a nice fine day for a change. Having had breakfast, I looked for something to read, hoping to find an Ansible. No luck, so I picked up the Aussiecon Two Program book, thinking that might be interesting, as I had had no time at all to actually look at it during the convention. I think the traditional colour I saw was red as I flicked through but inside me was livid turgid purple swirling around.

I looked at our ad and thought what a good waste of \$50.00, as it was poorly laid out on the page and shoved in amongst the list of attendees which no one in their right mind would bother looking through. I was disappointed and thought I would request that it not be put in such a ridiculous position if the opportunity ever arose again. Sigh... I learnt a lot about being a business woman at the con and simply stored away how to do a more informative and convincing ad for the next time.

Next I turned to page 49 and my insides started churning. There I saw in great big bold letters "FAN LOUNGE" and underneath "Leigh Edmonds and Jean Weber" will be Fans In Residence. A most interesting and informative piece of news.

So why did I spend so much of my time dutifully being in the fan room. Well, like Leanne, I felt that I had a responsibility, but doubly so as Leigh and I had also taken on doing the newsletter during the final weeks before the convention. This was because the organisation to get the thing published had been stuffed up. Guess who? Therefore, Leigh spent most of his convention in the dungeon. I spent most of my convention being a dungeon gopher, trying to persuade Leigh that eating was as important as getting the bloody thing done, going away when he started getting a bit irritable with my attempting to get him to eat, and sitting in the fan lounge being conspicuous by my presence since my partner was down below. At least, Leanne, you got asked to bloody do something, even if it did turn out to be a glorified waitress. I thought I was doing something, only to discover on the 20th of September, a good month after the worldcon had finished, that as usual I get no fucking recognition at all.

So, why did I too spend hundreds of dollars to go to the big city, work my guts out, miss out on either breakfast or lunch as well as the convention and receive sweet f.a. for my efforts. Well, I'll tell you... It was to meet such wonderful people as Terry Hughes again, and to solidify friendships that began when I had met overseas fans for the first time, and to add a few more people to the list of friends I really like... It was to see Joseph Nicholas dive bomb between two of the single beds in our room when the hotel porter brought me the extra blankets that I had asked for (after he had carefully put down his glass). I had to keep a straight face as I saw this human torpedo out of the corner of my eye, whilst courteously thanking the porter. When I turned around I found my poor husband doubled up on the bed making strange squeaking sounds and every now and then he would sit up and point at Joseph, after which he would fold up again and continue bursting at the seams. I don't think he has quite recovered yet. The mere mention of the incident has him chuckling away and that image will stay with us always. We had to ask Judith if Joseph had been serious, to which she replied "Oh, yes!" and proceeded to tell us of the various strains of Nicholas paranoia. Leigh and I had been naive enough to think this little display had been for our entertainment... Then there was the Nick and Lewis Japanese show which they demonstrated for us in our room. Hilarity reigned supreme and a special (unnamed fan) imitation was given by Nick with much smacking of lips to the enjoyment of all present... And then there was the party of eight (no, not that one) that was held in the bowels of the Vic after dinner one evening. Leigh had left the restaurant to go back and start work on the Free bloody, Press bloody, and the rest of us, finding ourselves at the Vic, went down to visit him in his lonely abode. It was definitely the best room party I have ever been to and one of the most creative and hilarious evenings that I have spent. Said persons were Marilyn Pride, Lewis Morley, Nick Stathopoulos, Terry Dowling, Kerrie Hanlon, Van Ikin, Leigh Edmonds and, of course, me. I still ached the next day from laughing so much. During the said evening I even fell off a chair whilst attempting

to write down a gem of witticism before it was lost in the mulga. Terry Dowling was much more sensible: he was down on all fours. And Nick, well, he bested both of us with his performance, rolling around the floor like a beach ball gurgling away as the waves tossed him round and round. Ahh...such merriment, such ecstasy.

It was the evenings that made up for the days...an amazing amount silliness went on..the gang of five was formed to replace the heavies on the committee... new program items were initiated at the Cafe Verdi amid much hysteria, and, amongst the changes was dear old K. F. WIDDERSHINS who was added to a list of notables...the poor old committee just about had kittens over this one but they didn't seem to notice the other changes we made. "No, I don't really want to be on that panel," says Terry. "She'll be right, mate," says we, "Where's the white out?". (Giggle Giggle) "Now, what about this one?"...and so we worked far into the night. What's the use of a world convention if one can't have a bit of frivolity with it. Gotta be laid back, the best Australian conventions are laid back ones, organised to be laid back though.

Fannish history was made at the Cafe Verdi almost every evening and one of the most priceless bits of nonsense was conducted by that famous British person we imported, namely Bob Shaw. Whilst dying of heat in the middle of an Australian winter, and me with my snow shoes on, Bob orchestrated the goings on in general to the delight of us all. He had me peering over the balcony, not once, but numerous times before I finally realised I was being had, and gave to Nigel, our "Waiter in Residence" at the Cafe Verdi what must be one of the most famous pieces of paper in fannish history. We advertised for Anne McCaffrey and Frank Herbert to go there and use their American Express or whatever, so that Nigel could keep their autographs, but since they didn't manage to make it, Bob signed Anne McCaffrey for him so that he wouldn't be disappointed. Fannish writers are an absolute necessity at world conventions. And, just to keep me happy, Bob has promised me a spotted dick when I get to England.

Somehow, during the convention, I found myself being talked into running for GUFF, which I now think is a wonderful idea. Thank you to all those lovely British people who convinced me into doing it. I still find it a bit mind-dazzling and look forward to meeting everyone again. I know I wouldn't have stood if people hadn't suggested me, not Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown, but Valma Brown. So, at least I get some credit where it really matters, so stuff the convention. Stuff not getting to their bloody banquet. Stuff not having anyone to look after us or not having breakfast laid on, and thanks for all the wombat droppings.

Mind you, the gang of five and the rest of the committee did have a bloody hard job to do, and the stress was great. Their failure lay in: lack of coordination, not knowing fans in other states, a program designed for 20,000, lack of communication, a program designed for 20,000, lack of care for their workers (in particular those of us in the Victoria), a program designed for 20,000, lack of tact and courtesy by one who should have a zipper on her mouth which the Chairman can use by remote control, and back to those bloody 20,000 for whom the programming committee designed their stupid bloody program. I'll be very surprised, nay, amazed, if it doesn't get nominated for a Hugo as a work of fantasy.

I made some comments in The Notional a few issues back, when I was writing a convention report on a con held here in Canberra. It was a first con for the organisers and I talked about allowing time for dinner, having time for afternoon

tea, etc. etc., so that your attendees have time to mix socially, as this is, I believe, a very important part of any convention. When I saw what the WORLD CONVENTION put up as it's program I was flabbergasted. These guys should have known better, I thought. Well, the inner five apparently did, but unfortunately for all of us, the people who did the programming presented it as a fait accompli, and advice and criticism was greeted with hysteria and a multitude of assorted emotions. Sad, very sad. However, on with the show and a delightful comment that I just happened to overhear in the midst of post convention gossip when I was down in Melbourne filming. Apparently, my mate Silverbob, a very sensible gentleman I might add, wrote over saying "You've got me on a program at 7.00 in the evening. I'll be out having dinner then!". When I repeated this tidbit for said Leigh Edmonds husband person, hysterical laughter was quickly forthcoming.

Over the five days of the convention so many nice things did happen, but one of them wasn't the convention.

Such is life.

Whoops, no washing...there's always tomorrow.

Written, authorised and done by Valma Brown in a no erkie perkies environment.

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*Now we'll take a break from Aussiecon Two postmortems to allow you to mentally draft your responses. But first, why not put on an appropriate recording and relax in your chair and read the following...*

#### SELECTED EVENINGS OF TORY ENTERTAINMENT

George Turner

- Puccini's La Boheme and Rossini's The Barber of Seville -

The Boheme was excellent but it will need a special attraction to drag me back to another production. The Vic Opera production was infinitely better than the last Australian Opera effort (except for the "Mimi" soprano, but the AO ha Joan Carden) and, save for the singing, far better than the version I saw at Covent Garden, where it had the advantage of Mirella Freni and Jose Carrerar, who sang beautifully but couldn't act.

Designer Henry Bardon tossed away most of the traditional ideas about the sets; though he had some trouble making the vast stage look like a garret, he redesigned the Cafe Momus set to give the chorus room to move and still leave the principals isolated in a small area of their own, and managed to make the Act III set (outside the Customs House) look less like a deserted graveyard than usual.

The singing was adequate rather than spectacular, the conducting tight enough to prevent the tenor playing silly buggers with the score, and the acting was superb. Since most of the cast are, in my memory, not good actors, the credit must go to the infinite inventiveness of John Copley's direction. Even the elephantine antics of middle aged singers trying to be feather-brained, who-gives-a-fuck students came over with choreographed precision.

But — it was sung in English, and at last I was able to work out just where Puccini got into trouble with his libretto. (I believe he drove the two librettists round the twist with his demands for miniscule but exact changes.)

The trouble, of course, is in the last act, where Puccini plumped for a sudden wrench into pathos (his dramatic instinct was sound, his literary instinct less so, and what he did to the characters cruel). Whoever did the translation was aware of the problems and tried to smooth the way with a few alterations of his own. So, the don't-give-a-damn duet of "Mimi is a heartless maiden" became a slightly mournful "Now her love for me is over", which at least helped to make some sense of the action, whatever it may have done to Murger's novel. Sung in Italian, that scene must be mystifying to anyone who knows the language -- or don't Italians care?

At any rate, it did make sense of everybody's tears when Mimi arrived, coughing delicately and doing a rather neat little collapse on the stairs. (Actors have doing faints and falls on stairs -- you can hurt yourself.) Then, of course, there was the constant embarrassment of Schaunard's aria of farewell to his overcoat. He is going to sell the cherished thing to buy medicine for Mimi, but Puccini gives him the impossible task of trying to be wryly humorous while everybody else is drowning in gloom. Roger Lemhe, an otherwise excellent Schaunard, did not succeed in being anything but awkward and, once the English translation has exposed the problem, neither could anyone else. Puccini's acclaimed stage sense deserted him here.

But John Copley pulled off a little coup right at the end. With Mimi dead and everybody standing around being miserable and waiting for the orchestra to stop talking about it, he had Musetta and Marcello change from him comforting her in a big masculine hug to her stirring to the embrace of her lover and becoming ever so slightly skittish. And so Murger's meaning was preserved -- that in Monmartre people die but life goes on and tomorrow will be fun again. It wasn't Puccini, but it made sense where Puccini made only pathos.

All in all, a good Boheme.

The Barber of Seville was brilliant. It needs to be. I have never been able to see that the rather bitchy plot about making a fool of a silly old man is great comedy (the Beaumarchais original is less cold-hearted than the opera libretto) and it needs, for me at any rate, an unashamedly artificial and brittle touch to bring it off. And that is what it got, plus the first display of what the new Opera Theatre in Melbourne can do with the mechanics of staging.

Director Anthony Besch belted it along at the fastest pace the music would allow with never a pretence that this was anything more than a display of all-out virtuosity. On that level it earned its ovation.

He solved the positioning problem of the finale by using the revolving stage. If you have ever seen Barber played, you will know that in the showdown scene the entire cast is on stage, bellowing fury at each other as the plot

comes together, while a chorus of twenty or so soldiers rampage around the set together with the remainder of the regular chorus commenting on what is going on. This usually means that the principals are jostled and obscured and the audience can only discover what is going on by consulting the plot resume in the programme. "Oh, so that's what they're doing!" It is simply a matter of too many people in too small a space doing too many things at once.

So — designer John Stoddart put three sets on the revolving stage, like so:

	Scene 2	
	Interior Courtyard	
	with staircase	
Scene 1		Scene 3
Garden and street		House interior with
with staircase		gallery and
		staircase

All the stairs, doors and windows were functional. (That's where the production money goes.)

In the last scene, instead of people standing and shouting at each other, the stage revolved and they pursued each other from room to room, inside and outside, upstairs and down, while the soldiers looted the place and the street chorus had a whale of a time watching the nobility make idiots of themselves. It was very exhilarating and the audience loved it. So they should.

The Spanish import, Pablo Elvira, was a wild success with everybody. He's no world beater but the voice is more than adequate and the comic timing impeccable. Also he is an ensemble player rather than a star, which is exactly what Barber needs. Also, Ronald Maconaghie surprised me with his character work as the old man, Doctor Bartolo, but I think the voice begins to need husbanding. Margaret Haggart also surprised with her playing of the aged servant, though singing lines like the youngish woman she still is. John Brecknock's Almaviva was good enough; strangely, he was at his best when disguised as a music teacher and a soldier, rather wooden in his Almaviva persona; the voice is nothing special, but good enough.

My one complaint concerns Suzanne Johnson's Rosina. She plays the role adequately and sings with a welcome exactness. She even sang Rossini's own music in the singing lesson, which is a change from all the divas who like to trot out their party piece. (Melba is said to have used "The Star Spangled Banner" at the Metropolitan. Now, that's really showbiz!) The problem was the extremely sharp-edged quality of her soprano, at variance with the alternating gaiety and demureness of the character. She would, I think, do ideally as Musetta, who is a raucous bitch given raucous music to sing. (Rosamund Illing played Musetta with suitable glitter/bitchiness, but sang too nicely.)

+ George Turner +

## THE NOSTALGIA GETS BETTER ALL THE TIME

GOLDEN AGES AND POPULATION DENSITY:  
NOTES IN RESPONSE TO SOMETHING TED WHITE SAID AT AUSSIECON

Comrade J Hanna

Somewhere during the "what's wrong with fanzines" panel in the Fan Lounge Ted said: "For a Golden Age, you need a certain density of fan population; unless you have the numbers you just won't have the talent. One isolated fanzine, however brilliant it may be, does not make a Golden Age. A Golden Age is a community production of the lively interaction of a group of people who feed on each other's enthusiasm and egg each other on to greater heights. Belfast fandom of the '50s, for instance, or London Ratfandom of the '70s. Unless you have enough fans in the neighbourhood, no chance of that Golden Age spirit erupting." That's the way I remember what Ted said.

It was a throwaway sketch of an hypothesis, a sidetrack from the main topics of Ted declining to put the boot further into Aussie fanzines on the grounds that he'd done that already, and they were all dead now anyway, weren't they. Were American fanzines any better? Nope, he said, and put the boot into Holier Than Thou. Marty Cantor, at the back of the room, did not deign to reply. As a guest of this convention, he did not deem it appropriate to engage in debate or controversy.

"Some minimum number may be necessary, but it's not sufficient," I muttered to Comrade Hughes. "Even so, more when it comes to running a convention than to fanzines. There's more people in fandom everywhere these days, but where's the Golden Age?" Whatever Golden Ages there were in the past were produced by less density of fan population than now. These days, we're more inclined to complain about too many fans crowding out our conventions.

We were surrounded by an Awful Example of what happens when less than the necessary minimum number try to organize even a small and intimate Worldcon. Overseas and interstate agents were swapping stories of all the letters they hadn't received from the committee; you were liable to find your name in unexpected places in the programme guide ("We did send you a letter. It's probably waiting for you at home."). And of course the programme ran late. Then there was the debacle of the Hugo presentations, saved by Comrade Penguin Ortlieb reading out the nominees and awards calmly ignoring the way the slides flashed out of order on the big screen.

It wasn't until the world fannish community descended for the Con itself to spend the weekend wandering around alternately complaining and pitching in to help that the necessary population density was achieved. The fans had a terrific time partying for Britain in '87, swapping scandal, brewing wild ideas like this ideologically sound tri-continental fanzine. A four-day-long Golden Age? The overloaded committee blamed Christine Ashby (who is famous for not being diplomatic) and heaved a sigh of relief when it was over. And the ordinary members off the street, who came in for a programme of talks on science fiction, won't know how to tell us what they thought.

But this isn't an Aussiecon report. So let me agree with what Ted said about fandom being a community. In his GoH speech, he called our bit of it a "neighbourhood"; Malcolm Edwards in Some Days the Bear Eats You 2 compares it to a village, an anthropological analogy in reply to Anne Hamill Warren's psychological analysis of us as a bunch of egocentrics with no small talk; others have suggested an extended family of ugly ducklings or slans. Or maybe just a collective delusion with the latent function of keeping the world postal service in profit. Whatever we are, a Golden Age won't be acknowledged as such unless it involved a substantial number of the community whose nostalgia for them good old days is warm and wistful enough to convince the rising generation that they missed out on something pretty damn special. Note that a Golden Age is always in the past, an artifact of memory. Is it these days any less a myth, a figment of imaginary history, then it was when the Greeks invented the idea?

Melbourne fandom had a Golden Age when it was much smaller than it is now, back before Aussiecon I. At the centre was the Magic Pudding Club, and flung off in all directions were zines by legendary names like Bangsund, Foyster, Gillespie and Edmonds which persuaded The Americans to vote for a worldcon in Melbourne. (That's how I heard the story. Comrades Brown and Edmonds, who were there, may remember it differently.) The Worldcon generated swarms of new Australian fans who enthusiastically enrolled in more conventions and played war-games both with dice and rattan sticks but on the whole couldn't quite get the hang of this fanzine game. There may be a number of social Golden Ages brewing away around dear old Oz. But none that the international fanzine community will recognize.

Jack Herman and I shared a Golden Age -- Sydney Uni Tolsoc in the late '70s. Maybe if Jon Noble hadn't been moved to Mordor by the Education Dept. there'd be more fanzine evidence to show than occasional contributions to early Wahffuls. As it is, there was Tolkon, still remembered as something out of the ordinary. The rest is a private nostalgia, shared with a bunch of people who've lost what interest they ever had in our fanzine fandom.

It's much easier to wallow in memories of your own Golden Age than to sell it to someone who wasn't there.

(There are strong advantages in wearing rubber gloves when you spill a cup of boiling tea over your hand. Not sexual perversion; I've just done the washing up as an aid to the philosophical exercise of sorting out what I think. Housekeeping as intellectual discipline.)

Back to that fascinating question: what kind of animal is fandom? Porifera, I reckon. Members of the family Porifera are colonial animals, assemblages of cells which may be separated (how I don't recall) only to reassemble themselves into the same simple cohesive structure, not unlike a con. Commonly known as sponges, they feed on diverse nutrients, ingesting all that floats by and converting it to an elastic skeleton of fanzine articles. End of biological analogy.

You no doubt have noticed the way I keep confusing fanzine fandom and convention fandom, running the two of them together, skipping from one to the other as if the two can't be kept separate. Quite. I call Mexican and Corflu, every con I've ever been to and every con report I've read as evidence, and rest my case. These days your fannish neighbourhood can stretch not only as far as you are willing to travel for a weekend of desperate fun, but as far as a stamp will travel on your behalf.



But let's not get serious about trying to pin fandom in all its varieties down to some definitive definition -- fandom is a bunch of people who enjoy coming up with definitions of what fandom is; and whatever definition anyone comes up with is descriptive of the aspect of fandom they were thinking of at the time. (If I decide to define fandom as a sponge, am I inspired by the thought of spilt beer?) In that spirit I float the notion that fandom is a continuing quest for some Golden Age, with Golden Age defined as the warm post-orgasmic glow you carry away from a convention: a purely personal and fleeting phenomenon which fades to a nostalgia for the vanished past which produced it. Escapist and therefore ideologically unsound, a cosy hot-water bottle of memories to warm your toes when the current scene chills you off.

Everyone should have one. Why should they be a privilege reserved for a power-grabbing elite? There's no monopoly, no one owns the trademark "Golden Age". Anyone can make their own. Go ahead, make one up today. That's what fanzines are for. That and serious pessimism about the Real World.

The trick comes in selling it -- that's where the advantage of numbers comes in. The more of you in on the enterprise, the more of you promoting it, the more hype you give it, the more chance the punters will buy it. Enthusiasm is the first requirement, talent in the way you communicate that enthusiasm to those who weren't there comes next. Wade in there and ladle it out. All that glitters is as good as gold. Sitting on your tod self-consciously polishing a spot of talent is no way to bring about the New Dawn when Hugos will be demoted to doorstops. Everyone will have one. Breed your own, even.

Bugger consensus: nothing more boring in fanzines than agreement. Luckily, it's not usual. A Golden Age is not a numbers game, nor an advertising campaign. It's a mood that catches you as you sprawl in a hotel corridor at 4am having a long and earnestly analytical conversation punctuated by giggles and irresponsible slander and insomniacs seeking desperate fund tripping over your legs. Sometimes, some fanzines remind you of that mood.

Proclaim the People's Golden Age, comrades, and publish it where you will so that all the proletariat may share in it. Attempts to privatise a Golden Age are not only ideologically unsound but fundamentally capitalist and downright undemocratic.

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Enough! The Revolutionary Cadre call on all you effete intellectuals to head out into the fields and shovel shit. Or chase sheep. You are permitted to shower before you write it up into a fanzine article.

+ Judith Hanna +

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"Why should we subsidize intellectual curiosity?" -- Ronald Reagan

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"Capitalism attacks education because education does not produce quick profit."  
-- Someone Else

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## CONTEMPORARY FANDOM:

## AN ONGOING ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEMS

1 - Towards a correct philosophy and practise of fanzine reviewing.

Comrade L Edmonds

What, we ask ourselves in a maddening fit of introspection, is the point of reviewing fanzines? This brings on a long pause which is at first thoughtful, but soon turns to embarrassed silence. At last one of the comrades suggests that perhaps the point of reviewing fanzines is to fill up pages in other fanzines. For this devastatingly pragmatic insight the offender is taken out and shot.

Having purged ourselves of shockingly reactionary thought the question is again put; and this time answered with more theoretical correctness.

Keen observers of contemporary fanzines will, of course, have noted that the art of reviewing fanzines has never been in steeper decline; and we can postulate that there is a link between this and the declining number and quality of fanzines themselves. Very few of the remaining fanzines now being published take the time to acknowledge the existence of other fanzines, and those that do so begrudge merely a passing acquaintance with their peers. In this way the forces of anarchy are let loose in fandom and the progression towards a new golden age is blocked. Or, to express it more explicitly in the terms of the latest development of Marxist analysis as put forward by the Gang of Five formed at Aussicon 2 -- classic class-unconsciousness is thus engendered in fanzine fandom. By this we mean that fanzine fans cease to be aware of their common heritage and the bonds of common suffering (corflu, overinking, show-through, etc) and exploitation (such as postage and paper costs) which link them all, thus making this class of fans demoralized and even less likely to publish and be entertaining when they do. Fanzine reviewing, then, is an important step in the education of fanzine fans to a proper awareness of their class and manifest destiny in the vanguard of all other forms of fandom; as a link between them as well as becoming the storehouse of all fannish wisdom and wit. Unless fanzine reviewing is taken up (as a major activity by fan writers who must throw off their blinkered and self-indulgent tendencies towards page after page of personal anecdotes) there will be fewer and fewer fanzines and fandom will sink deeper into decadence and lose sight of the higher moral purposes which separate it from debased everyday organizations such as historical societies, trade unions, political parties or Friends of the Australian Opera.

Having stated the theoretical explanation of the necessity of fanzine reviews (and the fate of fandom if this clarion call is ignored), we turn now to more practical matters, such as aesthetics.

Let us leave aside for a moment any definition of what a good fanzine might be. Let us instead attempt to define what a good fanzine review should be: what it must contain in order to meet the highest standards and how they should be written (no task, not even this, is too daunting for the scholar trained in the ideologically sound methods of Marxist/Roscoeite analysis...I just wish that I was one).

Basically speaking, fanzine reviews should reflect the highest standards of fannish sensibilities and criticism should reflect the correct ideological line and should be well written and entertaining. (Comrade Nicholas' reviews of a few years ago set a sterling example with their exciting "chistians and lions" exhibitionism, combined with a very firm grasp of what good fanzines should be like, how they should be produced and an ability to write much more better.) In passing we condemn the practise of just listing fanzines and their editorial addresses as a waste of space which does nothing to educate or entertain -- other than tell the original editor that her fanzine was indeed received, but not necessarily read and appreciated.

Having overcome the first obstacle to a correct understanding of the nature of fanzine reviews we find yet another question lurking in its wake. It is: what sort of fanzines should be reviewed?

It has recently been put to me that one should review the best fanzines, since doing so points the way to the masses so that they can find some objective items against which to criticize their own efforts and thus start upon the road to improvement. This proposal might be an excellent way of going about the task -- except for a couple of drastic difficulties which ultimately render the exercise futile.

The first of these obstructions to a clear description through example of an excellent fanzine which is free from ideological, fannish or physical taint is that there are so few of the bloody things. When was the last time you saw one; a creation of such beauty, wit and editorial skill that you would want to hand it around at local cell meetings as an example of a truly "great" fanzine? (Anyone who answers "yes" to this non-rhetorical question obviously needs a thorough dose of re-education or doesn't agree with the high standards which are held by the editorial collective of this very particular fanzine and who, by self appointment, know best.)

The other highly relevant reason for not reviewing the so-called "best" fanzines is because doing so is boring. The reviewer who wishes to educate and entertain will recoil in horror from an item which is perfect and about which nothing more could be said than "page 94 is an example of perfect layout" or "note the peerless pun on the penultimate page". A fanzine review column of none but perfect fanzines would also be a short one, leaving the unfortunate critic with a daunting amount of blank space in a fanzine which would have to be filled up with other material of a suitably uplifting nature. This would require time and thought -- commodities often lacking in the typical fanwriter's armoury.

It will be obvious from the above that, in order to ensure the future of fandom and to develop a correct understanding of the fanzine fan and her works in the contemporary fannish milieu, fanzine reviews must be written. Further, we have demonstrated that these reviews, to meet the highest social, moral and literary standards, cannot be written about the best fanzines. It therefore follows that these reviews must be written to demonstrate to the fannish masses the errors inherent in a failure to properly understand the nature of fandom, and in an inability to put together a decent fanzine. This can only be done by pointing out errors, not by praising so-called and possibly illusory excellence. We further suggest that errors which lead to poor fanzines are, in essence, the converse of those attributes which would appear in a good fanzine -- and that those attributes have already been given as the attributes of a good fanzine review (and indeed could be said to be prerequisites for excellence in any form of fanac). In other words, the cardinal faults in fanzines which should be

criticized are that they do not reflect the highest standards of fannish sensibilities, that they do not reflect the correct ideological line and that they are not well written and well presented. Most important of all, they should not be boring.

One of the serious problems of contemporary fandom is that the majority of its fanzines meet, with startling continuity, all of the errors just given. In to do something about this the editorial collective has appointed me to write a series of fanzine reviews under the title "Fanzines of the Leaden Age". (Comrade Nicholas might have written these reviews but for the fact this is a small fanzine and we must conserve space and words.)

In the second issue of Fuck the Tories we will put the first victims up against the wall. They will include Holier than Thou and The Mentor.

+ Leigh Edmonds +

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*Since the editorial board of FTT believes in the participatory nature of fandom, we are asking your assistance in helping us to choose an appropriate moniker for our collective editorial entity. Some of the suggestions offered so far are listed below. Please indicate the one of your choice. You may vote only once and remember this is not a multiple choice question.*

- (A) Gang of Five
- (B) Trilateral Fanzine Commission
- (C) Proletarian Pentacle
- (D) Stupid Bunch of Jerks
- (E) \_\_\_\_\_ (write in)

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Joseph Nicholas was unable to be present in this premiere issue of FTT and so we called upon Ronald Reagan to serve as a replacement. Next issue, however, Joseph will make a full-fledged appearance because he and Judith will be editing issue number two. The look of this fanzine will undoubtedly evolve as each of us has a chance to design an issue but you will be able to recognize it by the title.