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LARRIKIN 12, May 1987, is edited and published by Irwin Hirsh (2/416 Dandenong Rd, Caulfield North, Victoria 3161, AUSTRALIA) and Perry Middlemiss (GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA). Thanks go to Marc Ortlieb (mailing lables), Pam Wells (UK agent), ATom (art, last page), and Tom Cardy (art, this page.) All rights revert to contributors upon publication. This fanzine is available for written and drawn contributions, letters of comment, and your fanzine in trade (one copy to each of us, please.) If there is a 'X' on your mailing lable you are in danger of not receiving this fanzine again. We would like to congratulate Carey Handfield for winning the Ditmar for the Outstanding Contribution to Australian Fandom. Now if someone could just tell us, and Carey, what he did to win the award we'll be happy. With this behind him the kingmaker who gave the 1987 Natcon to Canberra is a certainty to win the award next year.

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Cheers.

LARRIKINS' NIGHT OUT

- Robyn Mills -

A lot has been written in LARRIKIN about food and drink in various forms from curry to (horror of all horrors) cask wine. But flicking through my old issues it has become abundantly clear that all these restaurant and pub stories have been biased. That is, they have been written by either Perry or Irwin or, at the very least, a male colleague; so the real picture hasn't been presented. So, when a short time ago, Perry, Irwin, Wendy, and I went out to dine at Caffe Larrikin (the restaurant naturally named after the fanzine) I thought a bit of accurate reporting was called for - and here it is.

As a general rule I've always found that restaurants operate on the inverse proportion rule. That is, the more you pay the less you get, and as I understand it the food connoisseurs have given this a distinct name - Nouvelle Cuisine; or to be more precise, eat before you go. Fortunately Caffe Larrikin didn't fall into this category and we were able to stuff ourselves with a selection from their menu of vegetarian and seafood dishes. The food was not at all like mother used to make - which is a blessing in disguise as my mother never excelled in the kitchen at anything.

The night we chose for our culinary experience was a hot Melbourne summer night. Thinking back I am sure it was the weather conditions that dictated the fact that we took alcohol (I can't think of any other reason but to quench thirst) and in true larrikin fashion as soon as seats were taken, corks were popped, glasses filled and the business of the evening commenced.

If memory serves me correctly it was at this stage that a flower seller

arrived. I can tell it was early in the night because Perry thrust his hand into his pocket, produced a five dollar note, bought flowers, and promptly embarrassed Irwin enough to force him to follow suit. I know it must have been early in the evening because by the end of the night Perry can barely pronounce "flower" let alone find his hand and thrust it into his pocket.

The next noteworthy thing about this evening was the verbal diarrhoea. Anyone who knows Perry even vaguely also knows that verbal diarrhoea comes to him quite naturally. Irwin, however, tends to be quieter. That is until he is in Perry's company and the subject turns to fandom. He then is equally verbose. In fact, I think it was Irwin who initiated a conversation with the waiter that led to a discussion about LARRIKIN which led to various photographs being taken throughout the restaurant with our two large larrikins in all types of poses in front of different larrikin signs and pictures.

The embarrassment for Wendy and me didn't cease there however. After we had finished the meal and sneaked out with the small amount of dignity we had left, the boys noticed a large sign outside the front of the restaurant practically shouting an over-used fanzine title. Well, it was too good an opportunity to miss and once again the camera clicked; only this time, not merely to the amusement of the other restaurant patrons, but also to various passers-by, four old Italian men holding court on the pavement and the local louts at the pinball palour next door. But Wendy and I are women of character, so we left the louts (those two with the camera) and went to a place where only women of character should go, and that naturally is a gelati shop. After all, it was a hot balmy night in Melbourne, two larrikins were on the loose, a good meal consumed, and a gelati shop discovered next door. Who could resist? The gelati I had was one of the best ever. It was larger than me and firm enough to lick without dribbling all the way down the cone. In fact, perfect.

We finished our evening at 3.30 in the morning after coffee and port at Perry's. It was during this quiet period that Irwin looked at his camera and discovered that he'd incorrectly set the shutter speed and all his pictures had been ruined. It's a pity as I was secretly hoping that they could be used on the front page of this fanzine at some time, but to coin a great Australian phrase, "them's the breaks."

On re-reading this article it appears very tame, but then, on re-thinking that evening, it was also very tame. Which leads me to think that maybe Perry and Irwin aren't the larrikins I've been led to believe and that the title of this fanzine is incorrect. After all a title should reflect character - maybe it should be called "Gentleman."

FANDOM INC 2 In the editorial of The Straight Banana 2 Tim Reddan mentions that he does his "zine to communicate... to entertain and stimulate others." However he doesn't - Irwin - "want to mentally masturbate in print ... So I'll get a hold of myself." But by taking hold of himself Tim has gone too far to the extreme which doesn't take advantage of what a fanzine offers.

Within the pages of his fanzine Tim offers such things as a look at the psychological effects of Multiple Sclerosis and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, and an explanation of the role of marketing by example of Australia's need to market its technology overseas if our future industry is to thrive. The problem with these articles is that they contain only brief looks at the topics. The 'skimming-the-surface' style makes them read like a precis of a magazine article or a forward to a book. They are

obviously written by someone who has thought about and understands the subjects, but they don't fit into the friendly format of a fanzine where the editor is more than just a name on a masthead. It is a pity Tim didn't try to place a heavier personal element in the articles - at the head of each we learn that he works as a tutor in marketing and that his mother has MS - trying to make his points through the personal anecdote.

Other items in TSB include a page and a half of book reviews of the one paragraph per book variety, and a half page survey of sf's inclination to lean towards the physical sciences rather than biological, social, and psychological sciences. It is a situation Tim regrets, as do I, and, again, I wish he hadn't turned on the skimming button for I would've liked a bit more meat and argument to support the thesis. As with most of the contents of TSB there is a germ of a good idea here, but it hasn't been taken up.

One item I did like, and I'm damned if I know why, is Brisfans, which just lists news about Brisbane fans, with not much more than a line per listing. Through this we learn about someone who just turned 21, and a couple are selling hot dogs to Brisbane's discoers. Not one name is one that I've ever heard of. I've long been aware that there is an active Brisbane fandom, but this is the first evidence, outside the listings of their mediacons, that I've ever seen of such a thing. A whole fanzine of just this type of listing would be tedious; as a fillor it hits a spot.

It is worth noting that in the first paragraph Tim tells us a bit about his motivation for his fanzine, "So I will keep pounding away until I get some response." I find Tim to be very unsure of who is in his audience, and this is reflected by the removed tone of his editorial presence, but as he continues to publish and starts to feel comfortable with the names on his mailing list I feel his efforts will be rewarded with that response.

By contrast Glen Crawford (in his Kobwebs on the Keyboard) mentions that if he "gets a satisfactory response... (he) will do another." That's a pity as I'd like to see his fanzine continue, but right at the start Glen doesn't place confidence that Kobwebs will have a healthy run. Glen's statement of intent has probably done more to result in a low level of response than anything else. A fanzine's existence should hinge on the editor's own inclinations rather than on what the reader wishes to send in, and if an editor isn't sure of himself why should his readers be?

The initial motivation for Kobwebs was to re-establish fannish contacts after a three year fation. To this end one of the two articles takes us through a short history of those three years. We are told about Glen's change of career, moving house, growing family, and how the family almost went bankrupt. It is all told in a light, breezy fashion, and nothing is covered in any depth. It would've been nice if Glen attempted to describe what he learnt about himself from living through the experience, but seeing how the aim was to bring us up to date this isn't that important.

The other article is an anecdote describing the time he agreed to be the one male among many women on a Christmas Parade float, and the humiliation he felt on the day. It could've done with some editing of the odd phrase or two (am I the only one who gets annoyed at background asides which make use of the words "of course" as if the information goes without saying?), but overall the piece works well. Glen is comfortable with writing for his audience, never mind that he hasn't said much to them for three years, and, if my memory serves me well, not a great deal before then.

It is probably unfair to review the tenth issue of Bruce Gillespie's The Metaphysical Review as it is so unlike any of the past issues and is unlikely to resemble future issues, but I think Bruce needn't have pubbed

this issue. It is just a ten page, stop-gap to fill in till Bruce can find the money to publish his normal, bigger issue. In these ten pages he has just removed a standard feature of T.R. and presents us with his lists of the Best of 1986. I always enjoy Bruce's lists. It's nice to be able to compare someone's rankings to my own (usually imagined) lists. But all things in moderation methinks. When they take up just a part of a fanzine they read better than when they take up a whole fanzine. In this format I found myself getting annoyed at the bitty comments at the end of each list - the only critical comments in the issue. There is no substantive hook to grab you, except the wish that there was a substantive hook. In the past, when Bruce has offered us a smaller issue it has been quite different from the usual and have been as good as a normal issue. (like Don Ashby's memoir of The Magic Pudding Club.) Here, well, I'm sympathetic with anyone's financial problems, and this isn't the issue Bruce wanted to publish, but on a cost per page basis a ten-pager is more expensive to post out than a 40 or 100 page fanzine.

And finally, I just want to note The Real Official No Award, the Eastercon 87 one-shot. It is unlike any convention one-shot I've ever been involved in, consisting of actual articles and not just oblique one-liners. In particular I liked The Acland Street Tarts description of the first night of the convention, Julian Warner's column, and Marc Ortlieb's call for conventions to release a fact-filled post-con report (Eastercon 87's should be appearing in the next week or so.) But the real highlight of TRONA is the on-stencil art, a feature not often seen in Aussie fanzines. Working with some rather inadequate materials Ian Gunn, Lucy Huntzinger, Lewis Morley, and Marilyn Pride provided a nice visual spark to the whole publication. Lewis and Marilyn were trying their hand at the medium for the first time and I think they acquitted themselves very well. As an admirer of their work and someone who wishes they appeared in fanzines more often (it is the way I'm most likely to see their work) I'm hoping they were fascinated enough by the medium to want to explore on-stencil art in a bit more detail. TRONA is not currently available. We want to make sure all Eastercon 87 members get a copy, as part of their membership. Once that distribution has been completed we will be selling the remaining copies, with all proceeds to DUFF, FFANZ, and GUFF.

The Straight Banana is available from Tim Reddan, PO Box 162, Toowong, Queensland 4066, and is available for the Usual.

Kobwebs on the Keyboards is available from Glen Crawford, PO Box 1, Avoca Beach, NSW 2260. No availability mentioned.

The Metaphysical Review is available from Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001. Available for the usual or \$A25 for 5.

LETTERS FROM OUR MATES (issue 10) - compiled by Perry -

Irwin and I generally restrict our letter column to comments on the issue two numbers back. But, as they say in the trades, a change is as good as a holiday, and Jack Herman has been somewhat absent from these pages of late, so without further ado...

I liked Perry's review of the year and noted that my nom-de-nym was the closest to being apposite as well as obvious. However, I don't understand why it had to be pseudoplumous. It could have achieved the same effect with the real names and a similar tone to the one used.

Is it any wonder I named him as I did? I can't agree with the last sentence - a bit of crypticism never goes astray. Neither does a good pigout as Jack well knows.

Melbourne fandom getting out for food and gossip is the perfect basis for an article. I wouldn't be too worried about the knowing looks aimed at Irwin when he does Wendy a favour. Cath and I have, variously, been getting that look (and other quizzical glances) whenever one of us does something for the other. People are just not used to a married couple being affectionate and thoughtful in public. Stuff 'em, I say. Do what you want to do and let 'em snigger and make their silly suggestions.

Not being married I can't comment. I have, however, lived in a share house from time to time and that has quite often felt rather like the back-end of a relationship rather than the more enjoyable parts. Which leads me directly to Walt Willis who seems to have his head screwed on the right way round.

Paul Stokes reminded me of the trouble we had selling our last abode, Oblisque House. It tooks years. James White used to enquire on his weekly visits as to how the situation stood now, with some tactful query on the lines of "Have you sold this old barracks, or have you still got your lovely home?" Our experience of such matters is that there is some law of nature to the effect that for everything offered for sale, there is somehow, somewhere, sometime one perfect customer. All you have to do is be patient; as in the Chinese saying "Wait long enough by the river bank, and the body of your enemy will come floating by."

The only trouble is that you could be dead by the time that happens and you won't have the opportunity to enjoy the spectacle. I will admit though that patience is a virtue when it comes to buying anything and it is a virtue I lack. If, on the other hand, I had the luck of Stewart Jackson I wouldn't have to worry about having any virtues.

I will admit Janine (who I share the house with) and I, feeling hungover, found a place first time. I mean, the very first one we tried for. I know people who have been house-hunting for months. It made me feel rather superior. Who cares if the landlord likes to pry. We can live our lies.

I should think so too. But looking at the problem from the other side of the fence Sally Deasley faced rather different problems.

Paul Stokes' piece on difficulties of rental reminded me of my days as a landlady, before Dave and I moved into the Warren. I had great trouble finding people who wanted to rent the house, despite the low asking price. Possibly that might have been due to the presence of Mick (long-term unemployed, and looked it) as a sitting long-term tenant. There was the friend of an acquaintance of Bevan Casey's who moved in, Con by name (and, it turned out, nature.) He was the one who built up the fire in the front room so high that it burnt through the chimney and some of the facing wall had to be replaced. Shortly thereafter he did a flit with considerable of the furniture and some weeks' rent owing. And for a couple of years after that we'd get police and SEC coming round asking us if we'd seen Con, or know where he was. They couldn't find him for us either.

Interesting method of keeping track of your tenants, though, I hope, not one other landlords will take to heart. Certainly not Harry Warner, Jr.

Paul Stokes' article seemed strange to read, for purely personal reasons. Several ages ago, back in the 1960s, when my job first began to go sour, I wanted to quit, I knew I was coming to be old enough to make it unlikely I could get another good job promptly, I didn't have enough income from investments to survive on the very modest cost of living that existed two

decades ago, so I conceived the idea of renting out part of my house to someone else. It would have permitted me to live frugally without a job as long as I wished, and I was very tempted. Then I became frightened by the sum that a plumber would charge to put in toilet facilities for someone else and I began to wonder if another person would plug in enough electric cords to cause the ancient wiring in this house to self-destruct and I didn't like to listen to records and FM stations on the headphones I purchased, which I would have needed to use for loud music with someone else in the house. So I forced myself to continue working until retirement income became respectable, and I've always wondered if sharing the house would have been more trouble than it was worth or a delightful source of lots of extra money. Since I didn't do it, I can't advise Paul on how to solve his difficulties. Maybe if he advertised the rooms as a unique opportunity to have daily association with a genuine science fiction fan?

Last night, I dreamed I had a very narrow escape from a cataclysmic auto crash and when I got up this morning, I had a lot of lower back pain, so I must have stepped on the brake too hard and strained something. Then I read about Perry's problems with his auto and now I fear an even worse nightmare tonight about my car. If he takes the matter to court, I hope he is successful. I can't imagine what he and Robyn did during all those days in an isolated motel with none of the conveniences of civilization like fanzine publishing facilities or book stores. Well, my imagination isn't quite as poor as I've just made it sound but I still think it would have been hard to figure out a variety of things to do under those circumstances.

If I replied to that and wasn't careful I could get into a helluva lot of trouble, so I'll give it the flick and move on to LynC who had more trouble in Keith than I did.

I wonder how many fans have been forced to spend the odd night or two at Keith too. At least your stay wasn't spent in hospital with a nurse waking you up every couple of hours to check your temperature and shine lights in your eyes! Nor is your repair bill the whole car! On the other hand, insurance did eventually cough up the price of the car, and even the locals considered Clive (who was relatively unharmed) better off in the hospital than the motel, so maybe we did have it better in the long run. But even so it's not a place I'd like to go back to.

WAHF: Craig Hilton; Tom Cardy who will going to Brighton this year and offers to buy Irwin a drink - but not me I notice; Richard Brandt; Eunice Pearson (twice); Kennedy Gammage; Gerald Smith who was "a little worried about the bowler in your head illo. Is he smiling so maniacally through his delight at shattering the stumps or is it that he anticipates his imminent collision with the pitch with some sort of masochistic pleasure?" and wonders if areas like the Dandenong Ranges "were put where they are just to satisfy us day trippers?"; Pamela Boal; Cherry Wilder; Joseph Nicholas; and Andrew Brown.

THE TROUBLE WITH DENTISTS

- Perry -

Some people hate spiders, some hate flying; me, I hate dentists - with a passion. If I was asked to list my top five hates in this world I would have no hesitation in placing dentists at the very top of the list. In fact, the gap between dentists in the number one spot and the rest of the field would be so great that there might only be one entry - although used-car salesmen have a good chance of getting a guernsey.

I wasn't born with an innate fear of dentists by any means. I can distinctly remember being taken to the family dentist when I was about four or five and finding the experience not in the least traumatic. Mum took us to see some kindly old soul in the centre of the city who used to give us rides on his operating chair so we could get a good look out of his office window at all the cars passing in the street below. If only all members of his profession were as gentle. Pigs might fly.

My hatred of dentists started back when I was about eight or nine, living with my parents in the country and attending the local primary school. At that time the Education Department of South Australia was running one of its health programs for country kids which was designed to take dentists to them rather than the other way round. I suppose the department thought this would be an easier thing to accomplish and enable them to hit a whole school en masse in a couple of weeks and then move on to the next. So it was with our school. The dentist arrived unannounced to us kids, parked his caravan/operating room round the back of one of the school brick buildings, well away from the main classrooms, and went to work. One by one the kids went off for an inspection, clean and scrape, and possibly filling. I don't recall that there was anything terribly frightful about this whole affair, although kids in a country school weren't likely to come back to class crying for fear of forever after being branded a sissy (or worse, a girl), and the positioning of the caravan didn't allow much chance of any blood-curdling scream filtering through the general din of classroom activity.

It soon became obvious that the dentist was going to take longer than originally intended with the kids in our school - maybe, being country kids, they could run faster - and no-one from my class had yet walked the dreaded mile, when, one morning, I woke up with a severe abscess on a back tooth. My mother and father thought this to be a wondrous coincidence, what with the school dentist being around and all, and packed me off in the morning with a note to the teacher requesting that I be moved up the execution list due to the terminal state of my dentures. This was duly taken care of and I marched to my fate with hardly a worry in the world. Innocence has a lot to answer for.

The rest of the next week or so is just a haze in my memory now. I only remember it as being the worst week of my life up till then so I have probably stricken it from recollection as best I can over the years. I remember the ham-fisted way the dentist literally gutted a tooth piece by piece in an attempt to clear the abscess and the way I wandered around with what seemed like a perpetual jaw and head-ache from all the drilling. The upshot of the whole exercise was that I went from considering dentists to be a necessary nuisance one had to undergo every six months or so, to a situation where I loathed them with a vengeance bordering on the homicidal. I hated everything about dentists; the smell, the look (white coats and maniacal expressions) and the sound of the drill. Especially the sound of the drill. That high-pitched screech is enough to put my teeth on edge and make my face screw up in sympathy whenever I hear anything like it. In effect then, I was left, at the age of nine, with a psychological hole big enough to drive a truck through.

So why am I writing about dentists now? Well, for the very simple and painful reason that I have had to see a dentist twice over the past month. Pretty bloody awful if you ask me. It's been sixteen years as best I can recollect since I last went to see one and here I am going twice in just over a month. As you would expect there has to be a good reason for all this irrational behaviour, and there is. As I mentioned in the letter-column of the last issue I am going to Europe later this year to attend the Worldcon in Brighton and the last thing I wanted to do was to be

forced by circumstances beyond my control to visit a dentist during my holidays. It's bad enough when you can work yourself up to the experience, but to have to be submitted to torture without having the opportunity to prepare oneself is a cruel and unnatural punishment that should be investigated by Amnesty International.

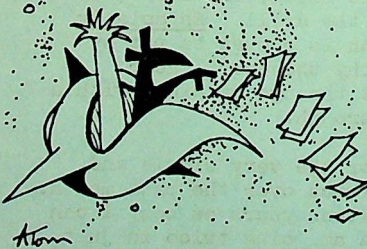
I'm kidding you a little though. There is a reason why I went to see a dentist at this time and it has to do with broken fillings. For the past couple of years I have put up with a gigantic hole in a back tooth after a very old filling fell out over a lunch in 1984. As inconvenient as the problem with my teeth was it was nothing to the fear and loathing I felt at the mere mention of dentist appointments. Nothing, but nothing, would make me change my mind. At least so I thought. Now I find myself with two teeth filled, a large amount of plaque scraped off, x-rays taken, and a sizeable bill to pay off. Not too bad for sixteen years of neglect I guess. Especially when you consider that both fillings were as a result of broken or chipped fillings. Bloody dentists. All they seem to do is fix up problems that others of their profession caused in the first place.

My experiences over the past month have mellowed me somewhat from my initial feelings, yet have not really dispelled the genuine feeling of hatred I feel towards members of the dentistry profession. The dentist I have been seeing has been as gentle and understanding as, I suppose, any could be and I guess I will keep going back and may even one day not feel the slightest twinge of anguish. That, I fear, is some long way off in the distance. So if you ever hear that a dentist has been brutally murdered in a Melbourne suburb by an enraged client who was last seen leaving the scene with hunks of metal and gauze hanging out of his mouth, just don't tell anyone it was me. I'll have to get my revenge somehow.

We know there are 1243 in front of us but we'd like to join the queue to congratulate Jeanne Gomoll on winning TAFE. In addition, we'd like to offer a round of applause to Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden on the completion of their term as TAFE administrators. A job well done.

Speak up Justin, speak up.

PRINTED MATTER



LARRIKIN 12

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