

LARRIKIN 14, July 1987, is edited and published by Irwin Hirsh, 2/416 Dandenong Rd, Caulfield North, Victoria 3161, AUSTRALIA, and Perry Middlemiss, GPO Box 2703A, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA. This fanzine is available for written or drawn contribution, a letter of comment, or your fanzine in trade (copies to both of us, please.) Art by Taral Wayne (page 1) and Arthur Thomson (page 8), Hugo nominees, both. Congratulations fellas. They don't give out Hugos for fanzine agenting or mailing labelsprinting, but if they did we are sure Pam Wells and Marc Orlicb would be nominated. All rights revert to contributors upon publication. Sounds good to me.

SOLICITING

- Irwin -

Carey Handfield has a neat way of getting out of contributing articles to fanzines. He told us he'll write an article about his summer holidays. "Great," we said, "and don't forget to have fun when out on assignment."

We saw Carey a month later. "How were your holidays?" we asked.

"Fantastic."

"Where'd ya go?"

"Up to Nimbin."

"Ah, Nimbin, ahh. You considering a drastic change of lifestyle?"

"Me? No! A friend of mine Claudia knows people up there. It was really very interesting, observing a hippy colony. It's a whole different life, and a great way of resting up."

"Sounds like you've got some good material for our article."

"Well I didn't actually do much there, just sitting around watching others. So I wouldn't have much for an article for you. Sorry about that."

Carey gets back at my attempts to get an article out of him by putting on his Norstrilia Press publisher hat and asking me if I've ever thought of writing a book.

Me. Write. A. Book.

Huh!

Thing is, Carey doesn't actually look like a book publisher. We all have an image of various professions and Carey must be the only book publisher in the world who wears jeans which haven't been ironed. Wendy and I first noticed this feature of Carey's wardrobe at Eastercon 87, and it's become a standard joke for Wendy ever since. She sees Carey and it's not "Hi Carey, how you been?" or "G'day Carey, what's cooking?" or even "When you doing your article for Irwin and Perry?" It's "Tak, tak, couldn't you iron your pants?"

The other evening Carey dropped around to see us. "Carey! You've ironed your jeans!" screamed Wendy, with a note of victory in her voice.

"Oh, no, ho ho," smirked Carey, "These pants don't need any ironing."

SIX MONTHS IN A LEAKY BOAT

- Perry -

Well, well, well, just when a lad goes out on a limb and makes a few predictions about the likely future activity of Oz fandom in 1987, whole skades of people come along

and, in a conspiratorial unity guaranteed to warm any paranoid's heart, screw everything up. Out go the carefully thought out theories of fannish entropy and spontaneous combustion and in comes a feeling of fun and good times; which goes against the national political trend and which is enough to put anyone off their breakfast. In ~~LAURELIN~~ 8 I made the unseemly prediction that the level of fear and loathing extant in Australian fandom would rise to a level only marginally short of our country's foreign debt. How wrong can you get?

I would be standing on anything but shakey ground if I were to infer that the rise in the Oz fandom good-time quotient was due in large part to the visit by Lana Horner to these fatal shores. Lana, winner of this year's GARFF (the Get Away from Reality Fan Fund) was sent down under ostensibly to foster relationships between Australian and North American fans, though nobody in their right mind would have thought that she would have carried things as far as she did. Trying to be all things to all people, Ms Horner, at various times, was seen actually talking to fans (both old and young,) photographing people in compromising positions and generally getting a good view of the Australian landscape as etched out on the undersides of barroom tables - arriving there via two, or at the most three, glasses of diluted Reisling. As might be expected from such an outburst of unfannish activity (never before seen from a fan fund winner I might add) the rumour mills were working overtime. A selection of these making the rounds being: 1) Lana was a reporter for Truth/National Enquirer/Tattler, 2) she was romantically involved with a Philip Island penguin and was just spreading around her favours in an attempt to put people off the scent, and 3) she was actually the subject of an upcoming article to appear in the Truth/National Enquirer/Tattler and thought she might as well get as much mileage out of the occasion as she could. She denied all such rumours, of course, but as a punting man I would be prepared to lay good odds. that at least three of the above rumours had more than a modicum of truth about them.

Another fannish visitor to this country this year was Lilly McIntosh from

New Zealand, successful candidate in the Funny Furry Fuzzy Fan Fund From across The Tasman (ie FFFFFTTT, that peculiar noise made when the lower lip is pressed upwards against the upper front teeth and air is forced out sharply through the ensuing gap, spraying little droplets of saliva all over the twenty nearest members of the human race.) Lilly was not as active in the relationship stakes as Lana Horner but little or no explanation was given about how she (Ms McIntosh) came to spend most of her time in Australia on crutches sporting torn ligaments in her ankle. Stories to the effect that the accident involved spurs, waterbeds, and wet suits were quickly denied, and quite right too.

Speaking of fan funds, Washington Irving picked up his gong for the decade by pulling off a stunning victory in the SLUFF (Soft Left Urban Fan Fund) stakes in January. When asked to comment about his feelings on this momentous occasion, he just said, "Ah gee," hung his head and moved dirt around with his feet. While many observers may, on the basis of this episode, consider him an unlikely candidate for such honours, it must be remembered that his campaign manager was none other than Potor Mason, a past master of the "if-you-see-a-head-kick-it" school of political persuasion. With a numbers man like that who is as handy with a tyre lever as he is with a telephone how could Irving fail?

A surfeit of riches was served up to the convention going section of Australian fandom when no less than two conventions were held within a week of each other at the end of April this year. Well, one and a bit really. FESTERCON held over the Easter weekend in Mairilbin was like the good old streaky cons we used to get before the war - lots of good parties, lots of good drinking, and lots of good people to poke fun at. Run by the redoubtable triumverate of Mike Roundlove, Charlie Footfall, and Washington Irving with the help of all and sundry, but mainly Amelaia Barhart, the con could do nothing but be a success. One of the highlights of the weekend was the fanzine launch carried out at the end of the St. Kilda Pier. A number of fanzines, after having been baptized with equal quantities of cheap oratory and champagne were then stuffed into the empty bottles and delivered, projectile wise, into the briny. When the fanzines destined for launch were offered up for grabs, Potor Mason was first cab off the rank to claim SPEN!, the reincarnated fanzine from Jack Linchpin. In keeping with his reputation as someone not to be messed with, Mason catapulted his bottle plus fanzine further than all the other feeble attempts combined. In response, a smiling Linchpin was heard to mutter that he was happy with the outcome as he always knew that Mason could "chuck a SPEN!" further than anyone else. The bleary-eyed Mason was not available for comment.

In contrast, DEADCON in Kanbra a week later, lived up to its name and died a quiet and practically unnoticed death at or about the time of the opening of the registration desk. This was not overly unexpected as the half-life of quarter-day conventions with little or no programme can scarcely extend beyond the concentration span of a dead frog. The convention's raison d'etre, other than a continuation of the Easter SCA party as some cynics would have us believe, was the presentation of the DRACHMAS - coveted by many, abused by everyone. As all those in the know realise, the only important category in these awards is that of Best Fanzine, the rest being there merely as window-dressing to put all those out of the know off the track. Winner this year was the consistently vulgar SAGE, edited by Warwick Richards and Bearnie Pearson - the Woodward and Bernstein of Australian fanzine publishing. Not wanting to be disappointed in the years ahead by not winning this category at every opportunity as others had done, the Deadly Duo decided to call it a day and dissolved the editorial partnership with narry a drop of claret to show where the knives had been. Big loser at the awards ceremony were those in

the audience who had yet to figure out the true identity of the anonymous editors of THE CROCK - one of 1986's fanzine high points. THE CROCK ran a close second to SAGE and it would appear that we, the general fannish public, are destined never to be informed about the fanzine's true origins. Well, for not less than twenty bucks anyway.

All in all, an amusing six months of fun and frivolity. Rather than allow myself to gain the reputation of being a doom-and-gloom merchant I won't predict that the latter half of 1987 will seem as if dead to the first. Though I should point out that with seemingly half of Australia away in Europe for the better part of August and September at Contradiction, little scandal and/or general unpleasantness can be expected. Never mind. Just remember, always have a full glass and keep punching.

LETTERS FROM OUR MATES (issue 12) - compiled by Perry -

While in Melbourne FFANZ winner Lyn McConchie certainly got into the swing of Fannish Fun:

While in Australia I had several nights out. In fact I found that I seemed to be being introduced to 47 different varieties of ethnic chicken. This is because I like chicken and find of all the strange things ethnic restaurants can do to food they can do it least to the humble chook. A night or two after I arrived I went with Michelle Muijsert, Mark Loney, and Roger Meddall, along with Irwin, Wendy and several other people to an Indian Restaurant in Swan St, just around the corner from the ~~11, 100~~ flat.

I surveyed the menu with some dubiousness as I could understand virtually none of it, (Greek to me, Mate!) but Roger persuaded me to order Tandoori Chicken. After a looong hungry wait this plate of bright green chicken arrived. I peered at it and backed off hastily, it looked to me as though the chicken was a little too capable of fighting back. Roger managed to get me to try a nibble or two, at which point I discovered I like Tandoori Chicken and hoed in. I also discovered Pan bread, and back in NZ I'm hounding my friends to eat Indian.

The incident that amused me somewhat occurred halfway through the meal when the waiter passed just as Roger dug the FFANZ cash from his pocket and handed over a roll of bills to me, big enough to choke Linda Lovelace. I glanced at the waiter just in time to see his eyes bulge. All too obviously he was wondering just what I was going to do to earn THAT much.

Lyn went on to mention that during her time in Australia she got to meet Irwin but completely missed me. Well, obviously the Tandoori got the better of her that night, I was sitting down the other end of her table gutsing myself on chicken, hot Madras curry, bread and rice while trying to drink Andrew Brown under the table. But, as I seem to remember doing the morning after, all of us must pay for what we eat - be it either in increasing girth or cavities. And it seems that fans are as prone to good old holes in the teeth as everyone else. Who was it who said that reading sf makes you more tolerant? Certainly wasn't me, and I doubt whether Michelle Hallett thinks so either.

I hate dentists for similar reasons to you Perry. My incident occurred when I was about sixteen, when the dentist decided that a tooth needed pulling. I don't know why because I wasn't in any pain and it was just a routine visit I was making. Just a check-up so my mother could say she was looking after her children's teeth. The dentist took these horrid looking calipers and pulled and pulled and pulled but my tooth wouldn't

come so he pulled some more and complained about how he would have to go to the gym to get some muscle to pull teeth. I suppose it was a joke but I wasn't in the mood. Eventually he proved stronger than the tooth which came out leaving one of the roots behind. So my mother paid for the dental surgery to remove that too. So I have reasons for hating dentists, though I've noticed that most people don't need them. The high-pitched drill probably does the job of making most people uncomfortable. So do all the things in one's mouth and the annoying habit most dentists have of simulating conversations with their assistants and asking you to comment on the topic in question while calmly scraping your teeth, activating various instruments, and telling you to open your mouth wider. I have a friend who bit her dentist's finger. I wonder if dentistry is considered a high risk profession.

It is when I'm around. I suppose that there are some people out in the cruel hard world who actually like dentists (though for the life of me I can't imagine why) and I suppose there are some who, level-headed as they are, just learn to come to terms with it. I doubt I will ever get to be like Martyn Taylor:

I have known three dentists on a social level, and there is no way I'd let any of them within a very country mile of my teeth. None were the archetypal sadist, but they were (are?) mentally subnormal jokers. And you, I should think the prospect of staring down someone else's mouth for eight hours a day would be enough to send anyone off their trolley.

My experience has much in common with Perry's, except my school dentist's drill did not have a high pitched whine, more a subterranean drone - it was an old model - and his attitude towards anaesthetic left something to be desired. I don't know, is pain good for the formation of the young character? He left me wanting nothing whatsoever to do with any dentist, an attitude which I maintained until one night during my first year at university. After popping enough paracetamol to raise the serious possibility of permanent liver damage I decided that a short, finite period of pain had the beating of indefinite agony. I think that's known as pragmatism, or maybe it's some variation on utilitarianism. Whatever, I've been a regular supplicant before the altar of orthodontism since then.

In a valiant attempt to make up for his defection to the lovers of the Society of Latter-Day Torturers, Martyn then went on to offer me a drink if I made it to Brighton in August. Have no fear mate, I'll be there. Who could resist a free drink anyway? Certainly not Mike Glicksohn.

Just a couple of months ago there was an article in the paper discussing some proposed changes to the liquor laws of this marvellous if occasionally antediluvian country of mine and one of the possibilities suggested was to make it legal for restaurant patrons to bring their own wine to dinner for a small corkage charge. Naturally, nothing has actually happened yet so it's still a matter of either not having a drink with a meal or accepting the outrageously inflated prices most places charge for any sort of alcoholic beverage. Every time I have a glass of wine with a restaurant meal I think back to the amazed delight with which I greeted my first exposure to Australia's civilized way of dealing with the situation when Leigh and Valma took us to one of their favourite eating places after Aussiecon, and stopped to pick up some bottles of wine first. When the waiter subsequently greeted Leigh with a partial wine cask that he'd apparently forgotten to take home with him when they'd dined there a few nights prior to our visit I was so damn impressed I almost moved to Australia! Happily there was now so much wine at the table that I quickly forgot this momentary aberration but periodically I

must admit I wish Canada would follow your lead in at least this one aspect of modern living.

And here I was thinking Australia was behind the times.

WAHF: Terry Broome; Stewart Jackson; Walt Willis; Diane Drutowski; Pam Wells (agont par excellence); R Laurraine Tutihasi, who wanted to know what a "guts" is. It's simply someone who stuffs themselves stupid, a bit like Justin Ackroyd really.; Dick Lynch; Richard Faulder; Harry Bond; Brian Earl Brown (twice); Pamela Boal; Mandy Brewin; Chris Mier; Sue Thomason; and Linda Pickersgill who wants us to take a Hawaiian shirt to Conspiracy. Look out Marcos, here we come.

FANDOM LNC 3 "It is very good advice to believe what an artist does, rather than what he says about his work" writes David Hockney in the introduction to his book David Hockney by David Hockney. It is one of the most refreshing lines I've read on the matter of discussing the creative process. The way I figure it I don't want to be told what I'm meant to find in a piece of creative endeavour, I want to be able to come to that conclusion myself. In fact I'm rather sceptical about people who have to explain what is in their art and tend to think they should've not bothered us with the art, just given us the theory.

So I was amused to see Terry Frost tell us that a fanzine's title should reflect the ambience of its editor's intent. "Oh," I thought, when I finished reading the first issue of The Big Sleaze. "I'm glad Terry told me the emphasis was on 'sexual innuendo' - I never noticed." Maybe I'm missing something but I fail to see how a condom consumer report, an unqualified list, a review of a book about a manager of a high-class brothel, and the occasional reference to AIDS awareness campaigns add up to something which is actually sleazy. Surely sleaze is a style and not a subject matter? With the right approach someone could make a symphony concert sound sleazy.

The major problem with TBS is that it is not particularly inspiring. Take Terry's Syncon 87 report - the longest article in the issue. The format is the straight-down-the-line "And then I did..." style. Terry tells us which panels he saw and who his dinner companions were, mentions what panels he was on and who he partied with. Everything is pushed forward for our consideration, but very little is told with any style or depth. While we were told the topics of the various panels, too often no attempt was made to relate the viewpoints expressed by the panelists, Terry's thoughts on those views, or how the panel went as entertainment (except in a one word summation.) Then we follow Terry to dinner and the parties, where no attempt is made to convey any sense of fun and excitement, or whatever it was that ran through Syncon 87.

The type of article Terry has here is the skeleton of something better. It has the bare bones, but lacks the anecdote and analysis, the conversation and the drama - the flesh of an interesting article. What Terry should've done is have placed the article in the top drawer for a week, and come back to it with a fresh outlook. Then he would've been able to chop and change, expand some paragraphs and delete others, and look for any points of intersection from which to develop a theme. Too often Terry misses out on basic things like enough information to understand what he is referring to, why he came to the conclusions he did, or why he bothered to mention things in the first place.

For instance, two thirds into the article we get this paragraph:

The Serious Panel on Humour that Michelle and I did was up against a Fandom Slander panel. Nonetheless we did what we could with the twenty or so people there, going over some of the same ground a later panel would cover. It was kind of nebulous. Some people thought it would be exact and analytical, without chuckles, but it wasn't.

That second panel is mentioned almost a page later:

The other humour panel was fascinating stuff, although Michelle Hallet and I had done one the day before. Lots of jokes changed hands. Some were even laughed at.

The con committee thought enough of the matter of humour to schedule not one but two panels on the matter, and thought enough of Terry's interest on the subject to ask him to be a panelist, but what do we get out of it all? A precis of the points Terry expressed? How those points differed from those expressed by his fellow panelist, and those on the other panel? How the two panels differed in their approach to a similar topic? The answer to these questions is a resounding "No." We are told that the second panel was "fascinating stuff" but not what made it so. We aren't even told who was on that panel.

Virtually the whole article is written with that level of lost opportunities. The narrative style left far more niggling questions unanswered than is necessary. When reading it I wished I had Terry here so I could bash him over the head for every casual mention of things without any qualification, for the few times he went beyond that it made for good reading. At one point he mentioned how four US Marines were invited to a room party. From there he went on to describe some of the conversation he had with them, examined their prejudices, and wrapped it up with a nice little assessment of where their naivety came from. It was good, insightful stuff and I don't know whether I should be grateful for even this little bit, or annoyed as it showed that Terry is capable of better things and just unwilling to give it to us.

The whole issue is a hog-pog of bits and pieces, some retrieved, Terry admits, from past aborted fanzines. Earlier he had told us that he wants TBS to be a genzine, and he will be commissioning articles for future issues. My feeling is that if Terry wants his fanzine to be a genzine, it should've been so right from the first issue. That Terry announced that this issue isn't as he wants it to be is very sad. But I tend to feel that one shouldn't cover up faults in such a way; take the editorial bull by its horns, privately note the mistakes, and do better next time. Part of me says that I should pass over making judgement of TBS as it is part of the First Issue Syndrome, but then I get hauled back into reality when I remember that Terry isn't a raw neofan, all enthusiastic and bubbly upon discovering the Beast that is a fanzine. Terry has been writing for apas, and contributing to other people's fanzines for some years now. I'm sure that at his home is a large box, a testimony to that which is the diversity of fanzine fandom. And it is a pity Terry didn't draw upon that experience when he went to publish his first issue.

A Free Lunch 1 is from Mike Christie and Sherry Goldsmith and is a good, well conceived fanzine, full of strong, individual, and varied articles. We are told that some of the articles, mainly the editors' own, have "graduated from Apple, (a) workshop apa." That term has me intrigued - is it an apa in the normal way apas are run, or is there an emphasis on actual workshoping of articles?

The article I like the most is Christie's "The Hitch-Hikers Guide to Literary Theory," which takes us through a short history of the various literary theories - Leavis, Structuralism, etc. It is something which could have been dull and plodding, all jargon ridden and academic in tone,

but Christie Livened the article by interspersing mini-reviews into its structure. Each mini-review is on Douglas Adams's Hitch-Hiker book and is written as if by the theorist being discussed. Marc Ortlieb is very good at writing parodies of the academic approach to discussing books. And whereas Marc's reviews are designed to cause a laugh, Christie's reviews illuminate the theory being discussed. That they are humorous is an added bonus.

The one major glitch with AFI is the lack of editorial responsibility in presenting a set of fanzine reviews by Tony Chester. Five times Chester's reviews are interrupted with editorial comments and opinions. I feel this was being grossly unfair on Chester. An editor doesn't have to agree with a contributor's opinions to feel they are worthy of publication, something Christie says in his introduction to the fanzine. But to interrupt right into the body of the article? It is far better to leave one's comments till the end of the article, or within the letter column of the next issue.

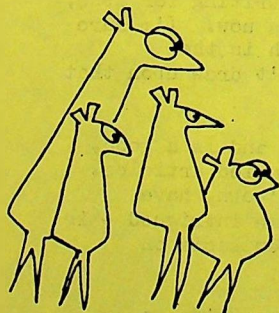
An interesting thing about the editorial interruptions was that one queried a contradiction with an opinion expressed earlier, and another suggested that "there is a lot of opinionation...and very few struts to support the railing." I'd agree that those two problems exist in the reviews but I would've thought it would be better to have written the comments in the margin of the manuscript, sent it back to Chester and ask him to back up his statements. As it is I wonder if the editors would've noticed the problems with the arguments if they didn't happen to disagree with the opinions being expressed about the various fanzines.

The Big Sleaze is available from Terry Frost, GPO Box 1808, Sydney, NSW 2001, and is available for the Usual.

A Free Lunch is available from Mike Christie and Sherry Goldsmith, 38 Gloucester Rd, Acton, London W3 8PD, UK, and is available for the Usual.

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