

LITTLE BLUE

NUMBER 15

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This fanzine acknowledges the members of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it is produced in Hawthorn, Victoria, and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

INTRODUCTION

Yes, there is only one issue of **Perryscope** in the April 2023 mailing of ANZAPA. You haven't missed anything; that's all there is. I hit a flat patch in March and just didn't have the energy or the enthusiasm to work on any writing during that month. There are a number of reasons for that, none dire, nor any relating to my health. I just couldn't get myself started.

GOINGS-ON IN THE GROVE

So we are finally empty nesters here in Elphin Grove: my son moved out of home in February, our adopted cat abandoned us, and, finally, our goldfish died. Total clean-out.

Our son, William, bought his first home, an apartment in Richmond, around October last year but wasn't able to move in until the existing tenants had finalised their lease. That occurred in mid-February and, after a fair amount of messing about by the property manager he was finally able to get the keys about a week after they had vacated. Then it was a series of car trips with all his stuff in the back of my car, and one day spent in a rental van moving all of the big items. Needless to say, none of that went at all smoothly but we finally got there in the end and were able to have a well-deserved beer at the end of the day. As you might expect, Robyn, still recovering from her hip operation, spent most of the day sitting in a chair supervising.

Some of you might recall, from previous reports in this title, that we had been adopted by a cat in about April 2021. Jessie did have a home in an apartment across the street but preferred to spend the bulk of his time outdoors. He had settled on our front garden and front verandah as it was cool, sheltered and free of other pets. He'd spend each night, and the bulk of each day sleeping in either the cat bed we provided or in a shady garden spot, depending on the weather. We were only putting water out for him. His owners across the street kept on feeding him and our main concern was that he'd get run down crossing the road. He seemed to get his timing right whenever I saw him make the crossing, but it only takes one idiot and he was for it. Then, sometime in February this year, we noticed that we weren't seeing him around in the garden as much as previously.

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In the next few days I started to see him in the street again, moving from his owner's apartment block down the footpath to another block where I suspect he was being fed again. Then he'd cross the street and enter another block of apartments, on our side of the street, but a few doors down. He seemed fine, and totally at ease with himself, as usual. We just figured that he'd found a better spot – probably one that also provided him with food or snacks.

And then, late one night when I was scrolling through Facebook pages on my phone I came across a note on the Auburn and Hawthorn Community page stating that Jessie was dead. It appears that he had been attacked by a dog, which was off the leash, and had died. Within the next few days there were around 180 comments on the post, some containing photos of Jessie sitting outside the front of our place being patted by a variety of people. He was obviously a popular cat in the street. And as much as I like to think that I'm not a cat person, it was very sad to know that he was gone, especially in that manner. Over the past few years he had become part of our family, rather aloof, but good to have around. [We have since been informed that the dog belonged to a visiting cleaner, who is now being prosecuted by the council.]

To top it all off we discovered our goldfish floating upside down in our fish aquarium when we came back home after a few days away. This was hardly surprising as we had been expecting it for some time. I don't know how old he was but he was starting to get all goggle-eyed which we have come to learn is a sign of old age in a goldfish. He got buried in the backyard, joining the other goldfish and the dead rabbit from many years ago, and the aquarium was deposited in the rubbish.

So that's it. All the pets – either owned or adopted – and both children finally out of the home. And I wonder if that realisation might have added to my lack of enthusiasm over the past few months. It would be hardly surprising.

Comments on Mailing 331

ASHBY'S ANZAPA ALMANACK 1 – Derrick Ashby

I have to tell you, and by extension Marc, that the BEST OF ANZAPA volumes were edited only by me. ●

Re the table on page 4: it is interesting to note the number of high-achievers, in terms of page count, as those who are still members of the apa. I noted recently, in a loc to a US fanzine, that I thought that Australian fanzine fandom was now mainly confined to ANZAPA. This table would seem to support that contention. ●

DAJA VOO #Doo – Derrick Ashby

The Saturday Paper's coverage of the RoboDebt Royal Commission has been hard reading. The Commissioner seems to be having a hard time keeping her sense of indignation in check, though I must admit she's doing a good job of it; it just seems to be bubbling away under the surface. Her put-down of Morrison last year when he wouldn't answer a simple question with a straight answer was a wonder, and so good to see him called to task finally. ●

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We too have the problem of maintenance on this old house of ours. We did a major renovation on the back of the house in 1997 – started the day Diana Spencer died – and some of that is starting to show its wear and tear, especially in the kitchen. The kitchen cupboard doors and bench top look worn out. So the question becomes: do we undertake a full kitchen make-over or just fix the obvious visible problems of the cupboards and drawers? I'm of the view that we do the minimum on the basis that we don't really know how long we will be staying here. Chances are whoever buys this place will decide on a major renovation so us spending money on a new one seems like a complete waste. ●

Quoz 87 – Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer

Mark – Re YctoMe about **Perryscope**: changes have been made. I've always made it a point, during this stint at least, of ensuring that there is enough ANZAPA-centric material in this title to be able to fulfil my minac requirements. It's up to David if he wants to include **Perryscope** in my minac credits, but I wouldn't be fussed if he didn't. As you hint, it did start life intended to be a fanzine for ANZAPA, but I quickly decided other people might want to see it as well, so... ●

Re retirement questions: I tried explaining what I do to a few people outside fandom and they were at a complete loss as to what I was talking about. These days I just say that I'm working on a full bibliography of the works of C. J. Dennis. It sounds authentic, and possibly even important! And it's something they can get their heads around. May I suggest you find something similar. Talk of fandom and fanzines just doesn't cut it with a lot of people.

I shall leave my congratulations about your retirement until you have finally cut the knot. Good luck with the planning. ●

The Hugo acceptor role was interesting but I doubt I will ever be called on to do it again. Mainly I suspect, because my days of attending Worldcons is rapidly coming to a close. I'll be at Glasgow, but not Chengdu, and thereafter? Who knows. The city will have to be one that I can sell to the better half as a decent place to start a holiday, like Helsinki or Dublin or Chicago. Another "exotic" European city would be nice. ●

Claire – Re advice on reading old sf: It all depends on why you would want to. I use the excuse that I need to review the books for our Hugo Time Machine episodes of the podcast, which is as good a reason as any. The main advantage of reading sf novels from the 1960s, apart from providing you with an historical context on newer stuff, is that most of them are shorter than your average current sf or fantasy novel. Not always, but generally. **Way Station** would be under 250 pages I'd reckon, and the rest of Simak's would be about the same. ●

ReYctoMe regarding tv series not completed: I shall see what I can come up with, but no promises. ●

The Fiery Participle 21 – Leigh Edmonds

Like you I find myself wondering what the world is coming to when I hear some of the muzak being played in supermarkets. I can specifically remember an occasion in a Bendigo supermarket of all places when I heard Jimi Hendrix's "All Along the

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Watchtower” followed by The Violent Femmes’ “Blistered in the Sun”. I have no idea of what sort of demographic they think they are catering for. Me, maybe. ●

ReYctoMe regarding travel: The hardest thing I have to do is to convince the missus that I can tack an itinerary onto the end of a Worldcon or somesuch. That worked well with Helsinki as I was able to suggest an overland route (well, over water and then overland) that went from Helsinki to Tallinn to Riga to Vilnius to Warsaw to Krakow to Budapest. Just about every city we stopped off was a World Heritage site and a bloody good trip it was too. These days her expectation is that we won’t revisit places we’ve already been.

That isn’t going to hold for 2024 as we are aiming for the Glasgow Worldcon and then a drive, clockwise, around Scotland, stopping off at as many of the islands as we can. Some of that we’ve seen before but there is a lot we haven’t. After 2024, who knows? I think my chances of getting to the Seattle Worldcon via San Francisco are rather slim.

As to the exhausting part, it’s a toss-up between staying long enough and staying too long. With the cost of the airline travel rising markedly in the past few years we find we want to spent a fair amount of time away in order to make it worthwhile. But we then run into the problem of exhaustion after 5 weeks. We were six weeks in the US and Canada in 2022 and we were pretty much worn out by the time we got back. And that included one week at the start and one at the end when we didn’t have to repack and move on every two-three days. So there’s always much more to consider than just “where to next?”. ●

Do I read the Australian fannish history now, or wait until the full production is available? Question, questions. ●

brg 127 – **Bruce Gillespie**

Springsteen just happened to appear before me at about the time I needed it, which probably goes a long way to explaining his impact on me. I have had the chance to see him in concert a number of times: Sydney in 1985, London in 1992, and then in Melbourne on a number of occasions. His best, for me were the two I went to in Sydney with John McPharlin, his early 2010s gig at the Rod Laver Arena (we had excellent seats) and his most recent run at AAMI park where he played the whole of **Darkness on the Edge of Town**. Yes, he is much better live than on record. ●

He Went Galumping Back 5 – David Grigg

Like you I’m not a great one for sitting up for midnight on New Year’s Eve. I think the last time we did so was December 31 1999, as that seemed like a rather momentous time, one way or another. ●

I’ve always had a Windows machine at home, as well as a Mac, mainly because all workplaces used them, and I needed to keep up with what was going on with them. Now that I’m retired, I’ve moved almost exclusively to Macs, though I do still have a small PC laptop that I take with me on my travels. Why? Well, if I lose it or it gets damaged I won’t be as annoyed. It was cheap and it only has to do one or two things. ●

That was an interesting story about your Apple Watch monitoring your fall. I’ve been resisting buying one as I gave up wearing a watch when I retired, but maybe that might be

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my next tech purchase. Maybe next year. ●

Oh dear, yet more “font porn”. It can be addictive so I’m just staying with Georgia. (Yes, yes, always on my mind.). ●

ReYcto Bruce about PDF vs print copies of fanzines: Bruce and I have had a couple of chats about response rates to modern fanzines, and I have to say that I can see both points of view here. Having a print copy of a fanzine on your desk acts as a physical reminder that you need to respond in some way. The PDF version can disappear very quickly. I’ve found with **Perryscope** that I tend to get most of my replies in the one or two days after it’s sent out, and then nothing until about a month later, around the time a new issue might be due. I’m guessing that the ones who write late have a method of keeping track of which fanzines they need to loc. ●

ReYcto me about font and graphic design: my new annoyances are white on light blue, and orange on white – this last was on the Chengdu Worldcon website for a while. Hopefully someone has dropped them a quiet word. I haven’t been back to check. In any event it was bloody awful. ●

Frank 4 Earnest – **Jack Herman**

ReYctoMe: I do believe that John Pesutto’s rise is partly down to his performance on television during the 2018 Victorian State Election coverage. And then, after he lost his seat, he was writing some interesting and well-argued opinion pieces for **The Age** newspaper. Cynical ones among us might put the point that he was a shoe-in for the Victorian Opposition Leadership given the competition. Which may be true, but he was the best candidate by a long way.

He hasn’t done a lot since being elected last year, apart from his attempt to expel Moira Deeming from his party for her appearance at an anti-trans rally, in cahoots with a bunch of neo-Nazis. Seems he got rolled in the party room so she was only suspended for an extended period. This loss may mean he goes quiet again. I hope not. There are increasing signs that Dan Andrews is becoming more and more authoritarian in his approach and it would be good to have an Opposition leader here who debates him properly. We live in hope. ●

Not body-shaming, just showing concern. And I can’t help out with beef prices. And lamb is also very expensive. Chicken and pork seem to be the go in our household of late. ●

Sketchy 7 – **Christina Lake**

Thanks for your continuing Icelandic trip report. You are going about it in a very different way to us. We didn’t get the chance to drop into any breweries on our journey as we were on a guided tour. Though I’m not sure I could have afforded the beer anyway on the Pacific Peso, otherwise known as the Australian dollar. I think we only had one drink in a bar and that was because they had Happy Hour on at that time. ●

ReYctoMe about Springsteen: although “Thunder Road” is my favourite Springsteen song, I agree that **Darkness on the Edge of Town** is my favourite album. I should write about that one day. ●

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Kingdom of the Bland – Eric Lindsay

Although I would prefer pre-travel COVID testing and masks I'm not going to let that stop be getting out and about. I really only have about 10 years of international travel left and have a large number of places still to visit. Generally, if we're outdoors COVID isn't a worry. It's just those pesky crowded airports and trains stations. ●

Crash of the Hard Disk 64 – Gary Mason

I believe Dan Andrews is talking about a new SEC as being a retailer specialising in "green" energy. As you say it's hard to get excited about such a concept. We can only hope that they find a way to supply energy at a lower price, though I have no idea of how they might accomplish that. Maybe the State Government will actively fund solar and wind projects and then direct the resultant power generated solely to the new SEC. ●

MOZ 36 – Murray Moore

When I figure out what that adjective is I will make sure it is consigned to the dustbin of history. ●

And that's it for mailing 331: thanks to everyone else for their contributions. Read and enjoyed but...