

ORNITHOPTER FOUR

Edited and produced by Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 103, Brunswick, Victoria 3056, AUSTRALIA for the 165th mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, the Spectator Amateur Press Society and some others by way of trade or saying hi!

WHAT'S GOING UP DOWN UP AT THE FACTORY: Well, until the Official Inquiry has been completed and their findings published I'm afraid that I am restrained from trying to explain to you all the incidents which have been taking place down at the Orrite Ornithopter Production Systems factory. I'm sure that friends and family of the test-pilot, Beryl Potter, will be pleased to know that she is expected to live and that she may be out of hospital in one or two years time.

Since I have no news from OOPS to fill up this front page this time I thought you would all appreciate the opportunity of seeing the words of the Company Song. As you are well aware, most big corporations have a Company Song which is sung at the beginning of each Annual General Meeting and, if the company is one that places a lot of strength on Company Loyalty, they may sing it at board meetings as well.

The tune to the song is that well known and world famous composition by Ludwig vanBeetworth called "Ode to Ornithopters" and the words are:

"Up down up down up down up down
up down up down up down up
up down up down up down up down
up down up down up down up

up down up down up down up down
up down up down up down up
up down up down up down up down
up down up down up down up

up down up..." etc

Orrite Ornithopters is a very Company Loyalty minded organisation so not only do we sing the company Song at board meetings, the staff sing the song every morning before they begin work, and to make things more interesting, we have a set of movements that go with the song. You can learn the words and the movements too... and the next time you see me you can demonstrate your support for Ornithopters by doing it for me. The movements are quite simple: Stand up with your heels together and your toes pointing outwards. By bending and unbending your knees you will be able to make your body go up and down. Next hold your arms out to your sides pretending that they are the wings of an ornithopter. Raise your wings and lower your fuselage (body) and we are ready to begin. On the word "up" flap your wings and straighten your legs thus raising your fuselage, then on the word "down" flap your wings up and lower your fuselage. On the next word "up" you again flap your wings to the down position and raise your fuselage and you go on for as long as the doctor has ordered that you exercise each day.

There, isn't that fun!

Next issue I hope that we will be able to reveal all ...

PERSONAL PARS: For a change, I thought, there might be something in this issue that tells you all what I've been up to recently. Then I realised that very little had been happening and that perhaps most people would find whatever I did finally write about dull and even boring. And I have no wish to bore anybody with this fanzine - if you were bored before you started that's one thing, but to think that I'd caused such a state in anybody is another thing entirely. Boredom is one of the worst facets of

human nature and is not to be encouraged in anybody at any time. I do my best. Anyhow, the only really exciting thing that has happened in the last couple of months was something that was, to outside viewers atleast, not exciting at all. Valma went to Brisbane to stay with her mother for two weeks over Christmas and I stayed at home all by myself for two weeks and avoided going out or talking to anybody or anything for that time. Now that's what I call real excitement. I have come to the conclusion that the person whose company I enjoy the most is myself... I always think interesting thoughts and do things that I consider interesting and I could put up with myself all by myself for long periods of time, I think.

The two weeks passed quickly and I really didn't get much done, as I had anticipated. Mainly I worked on my big scrapbook of pictures of aeroplanes - known at work as "The Edmonds Big Book of Planes". Not that anybody at work has seen the book (which is now actually 29 one inch thick books). What it is made up of is a million and one pictured of aeroplanes and plans of aeroplanes taken from old copies of Flight International and Aviation Week and Space Technology and a few other lesser magazines which the Department of Transport (work you know) gets rid of every year or so. Keeping shelf space for five or six years of two weekly aviation magazines was becoming a real problem, especially since I could never find the picture that I wanted when I wanted it, so I resolved the problem by simply chopping the pictures out... not that it saves much space in the long run because the scrap book takes up just as much room, but now atleast the pictures are beginning to be where I can find them.

The pictures are of course used in the making of plastic model aeroplanes, you'd be surprised at how much information you can get from a blurry picture badly printed in some crummy magazine if it's the only one showing you what the undercarriage legs on an aeroplane look like.

Two weeks work progressed the book from "BAC Lightning" to "Boeing 707", but enough of my problems.

The other two things I did during the two weeks were to take a train ride to my favourite city, Ballarat, and to go and see the film "Superman". Getting to see the film was more or less an accident because I was walking past the theatre the film was showing in and, recalling all the publicity about how everybody was crowding in to see the film, I wondered where the queue was. Since there wasn't a queue I thought to save myself some bother later on, and anyhow the prospect of the film was just about enough to entice me inside.

While waiting for the doors to be thrown open to let us into the theatre itself (the queue must have started soon after I bought my ticket because the theatre was pretty near full) one of the members of the Melbourne SF Club happened to wander in and so we saw the film together. After the film he went off muttering that his review of it in the MSFC fanzine was going to be that it was "corn, but enjoyable corn". Well, I don't know about that. My first reaction was one of disappointment, I hadn't expected much of the film but first impression was that it had given me even less than I expected. For a start, the first section of the film with Brando reciting his lines was one of the most pointlessly beautiful things I've ever seen, getting close to the ultimate in rococo film. I was a little intrigued by the idea of a crystal technology which is what the people on Krypton seemed to have, but the rest was just stunningly beautiful for the sake of being beautiful. The second section in which the young superman grows up reminded me very much of all those film recreating and praising (?) the fifties, such as "American Graffiti", and I spent most of that section just waiting for something to happen. The final section in Metropolis was about what I had expected for the whole of the film, perhaps on the same level as the "Batman" film with a few more special effects thrown in and a few jokes which would only make sense to people who had spent a lot of time reading Superman comics, or perhaps seen the old tv series.

Despite all the things I didn't like about Superman I guess that I'll go and see it again and perhaps even like it a bit more. On the other hand a film which I won't be going to see again is "BattleStar Galactica". People who have seen it on the little flickering screen probably enjoyed it more than Valma and I did going to see it in a theatre, especially since it was the same theatre in which they had previously shown "Earthquake". In "Star Wars" I could kind of forgive them having spaceships making rumbling sounds as they went past, but in BattleStar Galactica the whole theatre shook - and when one of the other BattleStars blew up and then later the same thing happened to the planet and the theatre seemed to be trying to shake itself down, that was too much.

I mentioned to Paul Stevens some time later that I'd been to see this film and he advised me that the only cure was to "go and wash your mind out with Star Wars". Perhaps so.

And the special effects - generally my only reaction was bleah!. The models were even worse. I can just, if I try really hard, accept the X-wing fighters in Star Wars as workable, but the little Viper things in the other film are just not on. For a start, where do they store all the fuel they use. Everything behind the pilot seems to be engines and everything in front has to be avionics and armament, so where is the petrol. Even more offputting is the way the little Vipers seem to treat the BattleStar as some sort of aircraft carrier. I may just buy the idea of a mothership giving the littelies a running start but I can't see any reason at all for having to land on a runway and inside the hangar as well. It seems to me that space ships, no matter how big or small, should be able to become stationary relative to each other and dock nice and peacefully. Oh well! And, of course we later see a whole lot of Vipers sitting stationary on the ground with no runway in sight which tells you that they are able to take off and land vertically and it should be a lot easier to land softly on a starship than to land softly on a planet. I also found my credulity stretched a little each time a Viper pilot decided he was going to go faster and pushed forward on his control stick. Even I know that pushing forward on a control stick makes an aircraft go down, not go faster.

All these may be little points, but they add up to one big putoff. And as for the acting, I see that they are doing re-runs of "Bonanza" on the tv, what more could you want.

THE INFLUENCE OF DOCTOR WHO IN SCIENCE FICTION: An issue or two back we remarked (we think that we remarked) on the similarity between Darth Vader and the Martian Ice Warriors from the "Doctor Who" series. This time around we'd like to comment on the similarity between the baddies in the tin plate suits from "Battle Star Galactica" and the Daleks from "Doctor Who". This time the similarity is not visual, but that is about the only way in which the two creatures are not similar. For a start they both sound the same, but more important they share a similar attitude to the human race and all species that are not their own. I suppose that if a Dalek wanted to strut around in a polished tin suit he could do so like the other baddies, it's just that a little Dalek fighting machine must be a lot cheaper. And just because the tin pot baddies go around in suits with two arms and two legs, are we sure that they aren't ugly and nasty inside just like Daleks?

THE INFLUENCE OF WORDS IN SCIENCE FICTION: The other thing I was going to write about this time were the couple of sf books I've recently read, although since one was a serial in ANALOG it may not technically be a book.

The first one was "In The Ocean of Night" by Greg Benford. It's not a bad book and most of it makes up to be fairly enjoyable reading. The basic idea is that there is this fellow who is a bit screwed up inside but all the same he's the one who's made first contact with two alien spaceships and put onto the team to investigate a

third alien ship which crash landed on the moon about a million years ago. There is some fine material in here which gives the feeling of alien technology without pretending to understand it, some nice stuff on future society and although this would never make it into my top fifty books it was a good read. The major faults were that there was a whole second section which has the hero involved with this woman who discovers that she's dying of an illness caused by pollution and boy does he ever put himself through the hoops worrying about it and doing crazy things as a result - perhaps any of us would act similarly in the same situation, but not in a book like this where it adds fifty pages to the length and nothing much to the plot. Right at the end of the book we readers are beginning to catch onto the idea that the hero of the book is a person who is screwed up internally by all sorts of neuroses and other psychological problems, but it was something I didn't pick up because I was under the impression that he was the only sane character in the book. And if you don't pick that up early enough the final few pages fall rather flat - they probably fall flat anyhow.

"Stardance II" by Spider Robinson (ho-ho?) and his wife which was serialised in ANALOG is an unlikely story about a group of classical dancers who shoot off to Saturn to meet up with a bunch of aliens who, in a previous story called "Stardance", caused some unfortunate things to take place. To begin with, I'm afraid that I can't come at dance as a form of universal conversation (probably since I am no fan of dancing) so a good half of the plot misses me. The bits I did like were the bits on the way out to Saturn since I'm a sucker for any deepspace setting, and that's about it. The end fell in a really big hole when it turned out that the aliens had to offer the dancers the next step in evolution which in one swoop gave them immortality, ability to live in space with no clothes and telepathy. This, as it turned out, was going to be the salvation of humankind since we could all pop out to Saturn and get our dose of the next evolutionary step and all become little buddhas floating in free space.

The thing that I really didn't like about the story was that in the end the problems of earth were going to be solved by the interstellar goodies come to save us. Some people might like this because it is a great dream and absolves us as a race of solving any of our own problems - but because of this I find that kind of story a moral evil in that it does not make us responsible for our actions. People who read this kind of thing and get off on it are going to lie back letting the world go to hell while they wait for the interstellar goodies to come and save us from ourselves. Thinking back on it, the Benford story also ends on this note, for although the goodies may not have taken a hand directly in our affairs, they have left the key to unlocking the powers of the human mind in their computer, and that comes to more or less the same thing. Ghod preserve us from the aliens with good intentions saving us from ourselves

WE TOO GET LETTERS: Chief Ornithopter Agent Leanne Frahm writes:

Thanks for the Third Ornithopter Newsletter. I'm glad to see that you fellows down at the design centre are plugging on. I've noted your problems in the international market-place, and I think I may be able to help.

Being Australia's most forward-thinking and progressive state, Queensland is always on the look-out for large-scale overseas investment. I got in touch with Joh -- we've patched up that little centretemp when he forgot to answer my letter on street-march policy - and he's offered to sell your Russian friends 500 acres of prime mangrove swamp handy to Mackay harbour for the factory.

As you've no doubt heard, Joh's building a one million dollar factory for a dress-making firm at Beenleigh, and, ever quick to spot a good profit, he's promised to look favourably on any future requests along the same lines.

All he wants in return (ignoring for a moment the royalties, leasing charges, international exchange

stamp duties, etc.,) is for us to drop the title Orrite Ornithopter Production Systems in favour of something like Joint Ornithopter Hawkers Ltd., and to make sure all the ornies incorporate the initials into their serial numbers -- JOH-007. The big advantage is, of course, that if (god forbid) any of the production staff happen to have a fatal accident in test flights, the families won't have to pay death duties.

You'll have to be quick though. The grapevine has it that Joh's seriously considering a few other investment opportunities -- like leasing the Great Barrier Reef and associated archipelagoes for salt production by the Siberian Mining Corp. -- Tropic Division, and selling a fair bit of the Outback to an Arabian combine interested in cross-breeding beasts-of-burden with armadillos to produce armour-plated camels for desert warfare.

Carry on, and Up the Ornithopter (with any luck).

Leanne, you would be surprised to know how much confusion your letter threw us into. Only two days previously we had received a similar offer from the Victorian state government involving some land at Melton (we think) which they said was too hot for any other use. Odd, isn't it, how these political leaders all want to get their names into the act,, Leader Hamer wanted to see OOPS change its name to Hamer Ornithopter Productions but we felt that it didn't have quite the image we are trying to project. Keep up the good work. In reward for your efforts to raise the fortunes of ornithopters in the far north we've already reserved a free ticket for you on the first commercial ornithopter flight... aren't you thrilled?

Van Ikin writes:

Irwin Hirsh's

"confessions" brought back memories! It's no wonder people rebel against English when they're forced to write essays on tunnels and barriers. I don't know to what extent educational methods may differ from state to state, but during my own high schooling at ol' Ashfield Boy's High I was disappointed when after third year, you were no longer required to write "compositions", but instead had to churn out "essays" on the literary texts under study.

For us,

"composition" usually meant writing a story, and in my first two years of high school my composition book became a collection of brief sf stories. Even the old standby topic, "What I Did in My Holidays" could be converted to an sf theme (chasing flying saucers, etc) though I was once floored when the teacher insisted that we give a true account. Ironically, that account had to cover the Christmas when, at age 13, I read Dickens' A TALE OF TWO CITIES (on sudden, stumbling impulse) - and of course the teacher was no more inclined to believe that than he was inclined to believe in UFOs and aliens.

Around fourth year high school, when the threat of important exams had settled upon me, I wrote my final high school composition. It was either in the School Certificate exam, or in a pre-school Certificate "intelligence test" - type exam for Commonwealth scholarships (I don't remember which) that there was a question, "Write a Short Story". And I can remember that my story was 90% stolen from a Marvel Comic story I'd read about two nights before. Not a superhero story, but one of the early Marvel sf/wierd 4-page filler efforts. The Marvel version was called, I think, "The Crazy Maze", and when I had read it I had thought it was a rather lame ending. So in my version the ending was altered.

Looking back, I don't really think it was cheating (nor did I think so at the time, though I felt as smug as one who cheats and gets away with it). To "pinch" the Marvel story, I had needed to convert the comics-format into straight prose, and pick out the essence of the tale in order to get it told in the short time available. Moreover, I did change the ending. So I think that probably all I did was to pinch their idea...

And anyway, I suspect many students (especially sf fans, perhaps?) could tell a similar story of having

"adapted" someone else's idea...

Not me, though I can remember one time writing my own story with my own super-science devices and the teacher couldn't understand what it was all about - and neither could I when I tried to read it again.

And now to Elizabeth Darling:

Your fanzine is in my correction file, and in between marking essays on ROMEO AND JULIET I'm writing a letter of comment on Irwin Hirsh's essay on "Barriers" where he criticizes both the C.S.S.E. Written Expression paper for 1973 and the present HSC English Expression course. I think some of these criticisms are unjustified. If I sound didactic it's because I have my teaching hat on top of my beanie.

It concerns me that Irwin has criticized the CSSE paper with inadequate information. I intend to supply it! Do you blame a chisel because it will not drill holes? (Clear Thinking Classes in HSC will teach us that we cannot prove an argument by analogy, but it does help with explanations!) The CSSE papers were set for a specific purpose to be used under particular conditions; Irwin's teacher is not using them for that purpose. That's not the fault of the papers! They were effective in 1973; I know, I helped assess the writing they stimulated. Some of it was Brilliant!

CSSE Expression papers were prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research (an institute once graced by John Foyster, although appeals to Authority aren't proof either!) to provide stimulus material for Form 4 students. They were asked to write 4 pieces in 2 hours, but form or content were not proscribed. What we were looking for was people who could write. People needed beginning points for writing, and that was all they were, beginnings. So the elements in Essay 1 didn't need to be connected, and as the of Essay 2 "Use this illustration as the basis for a piece of writing in any form you like" was not to demand a precise description (it was a view from the bottom of a well incidentally) therefore it was not important to have a clear reproduction. As for the layout; each unit was a coherent entity, and certainly none of the students I supervised were faced by the need to turn the booklet round to prepare for Essay 3.

Irwin doesn't think that HSC Expression should be compulsory. Perhaps Irwin isn't quite clear about what HSC Expression is meant to teach. I'm not sure that it should be compulsory, some children learn to read without anyone making too much of an effort to teach them, and I'm sure that the skills that the HSC Expression syllabus tries to teach are already in the repertoire of some HSC students, so perhaps it needn't be compulsory, but to argue that an individual won't need these skills is ludicrous! I'm talking about syllabus, which indicates what skills should be taught, not about an individual's experience of a particular subject. I'm tired of hearing the course criticized when what is at fault is some particular set of circumstances where teacher, student, environment, or interaction between these are at odds and working inefficiently.

Irwin claims a doctor will never need the skills which the HSC Expression Course is meant to develop!! Find me a doctor who doesn't need the skills of logical analysis, the ability to summarize and sort information, skill in sorting fact from opinion, information from prejudice, desire from reality; find me a doctor who doesn't need a sensitivity to language use which enables him to hear what the patient is really saying, who doesn't need an understanding of cultural attitudes to help him discern pain from passion and you'll show me someone who can only give pills, not heal people! We all need care in language use, a sensitivity to other's use of language, an awareness of the need to collect adequate and valid information before making decisions, an ability to sort, summarize, and analyse information and argument, to say nothing of a deeper knowledge of ourselves and others...

All right, Leigh, I know that HSC Expression classes don't always contribute to the general good of mankind, but I do think we'd all do better if students were a little more positive about what they can usefully acquire, instead of being so contemptuous and arrogant about the failure of all classes and assignments to meet perfection!

Now, back to my far from perfect ROMEO AND JULIETS.

P.S. I hope you'll correct my spelling mistakes!:

Elizabeth, you shock me... expecting me to pick up spelling mistakes. Good grief, I'm in the business of inventing them. And the only reason I looked up "didactic" was to see what it means, not to see how you spell it. But congratulations, that is the first time that the word "didactic" has ever appeared in one of my fanzines, must be something about the tone of voice I adopt.

But all the same, thanks for your thoughts. It had never occurred to me to wonder what the English Expression course was for, to most students the course must seem to be like the whole education system, something you can't get out of so you will have to put up with. While I agree with you that the students need a more positive attitude to what they are doing I am worried that this attitude may be becoming less and less present in the students - and if it is, how do you get it back to them?

Before we progress I'll simply tell interstate and overseas foreigners that HSC stands for Higher School Certificate. It is the result of a set of exams that you do at the completion of the secondary school education. If you don't pass it you don't get into university and these days most employers will require that new employees have it as a work qualification.

Next, from the Swift & Middlemiss All Dancing All Singing Duo we have Perry Middlemiss:

To be honest I know next to nothing about the different models of aircraft. I'll fly in them whenever I can afford it and as long as they get me where I want to go they don't particularly enter my thoughts.

I don't know if you are still reading sf these days but if you are there's quite an interesting story by Dean McLaughlin called "Hawk among the Sparrows" that you may find amusing. It's about a pilot flying an ultra-modern jet fighter in the 80's or 90's who gets caught in a time warp somehow and ends up in Europe during the first world war. He decides to join up with the allies naturally enough and the story mainly concerns his efforts to keep his plane flying and being of some tactical use.

I remember it well, a cover story in ANALOG in fact, the cover attracted me to buy the issue with the story in it, and I thought the story was silly. The pilot in the story was an idiot of the first order since it should be obvious to anybody that an infra-red seeking missile will only home on large heat sources such as the tailpipes on jet fighters. Not realising that a heat seeking missile won't shoot down a Fokker triplane until you've fired the thing deserves to get the firer locked up for a long time.

Australia's defence spending, particularly in the area of fighter/bomber aircraft, has always bewildered me. I would think that they should try to defend Australia very well or not at all. The amount they are spending seems to be providing a very inadequate defence for the whole of Oz. Possibly I'm being a little naive. In the event of any open aggression against our fair shores the powers that be will probably re-instigate the "Brisbane line" (I hope that's right) where they will only defend the portion of Oz that lies to the east of a line drawn from Brisbane to Melbourne. At the moment, I don't believe we can even defend that part and buying a half-dozen or so ultra-shithot planes isn't going to make a scrap of difference. As you say, if they bought a couple of hundred

run of the mill fighters they could spread them around Australia a helluva lot better.

One couldn't agree more. However it seems that the lovely Australian government is planning on the "or not at all" option you mentioned in your letter. It seems that the RAAF are planning to stretch the operation lives of the Mirages to the late 80's but that they haven't been given the money to start on the work to bring the aircraft up to a standard where they can operate for that much longer. Apparently the short list for the replacement fighter is now down to the McDonnell Douglas/Northrop F-18, the General Dynamics F-16 and the French Dassault Mirage 2000 (which is one beautiful aeroplane). People from the RAAF are going to France and the US on a junket early this year and we might even have the final word by the end of the year.

By the time that Paul, Helen and I got to the letter that you mention we were all too far gone to remember to take a carbon of it. So we may have to coerce you into giving it an airing someday.

Never!

Finally we have

Mary Long:

Yesterday was a red letter day. I found me first cucumber and a MELON too! The cucumber must have been well disguised, as I inspected the jungle there (couldn't call it a vine) every day. And also, I thought the melons had not germinated, and there is a real melon out there! I got Sam to take a picture of it; I mean, you can't even grow 'em out of doors in England. We are now finishing up our first crop of lettuce. The carrots I left too long to thin, but make nice 'nibblies'. Something ate the tops of my beets down to the ground, but ignored the lettuce, otherwise I should have suspected the local rabbits. Any ideas what it could be? I think that they all did pretty well considering we had snow on the ground for over three months, the ice-storm, then the weekend I put in the seeds, it rained non-stop and they were under two inches of water - and I'd not even had time to dig over the patch!

Your garden seems to be doing better than ours, the weeds are doing fantastic business even though Valma and I have declared war on them and rip them from the ground at almost first sight. We've got a mass of tomato plants in but so far only one tomato - and it doesn't seem to want to go red even though it's been hanging there for the past two weeks. One cucumber is just about ready to be picked, but we keep putting it off in the hope that it will grow just a little bit more. The pumpkins are growing fantastically, the only problem with them is that we didn't plant any, they just came up and in the wrong place at the wrong time.

So, to complete the letters we have the We Also Heard Froms - only we didn't hear from anybody else.

SOME COMMENTS ON FAPA MAILING 164

SYNAPSE/Jack Speer: Very little is known about the Time Lords in the Doctor Who series, this is probably because when the show started they didn't exist and have been invented little by little since then. The "Doctor" once described them as "temporal police" which suggests that they administer time travel though I get the impression that they have discovered it for themselves and being noble and high minded people they realise that it is a very dangerous thing and restrict it as much as possible to themselves. Perhaps the reason the Doctor is a renegade is because he uses his time machine for the good of mankind or anything else that seems to deserve a bit of good luck for a change. I also seem to recall that the Time Lords have a "first contact" law similar to many space travellers (ie Captain Kirk and the crew) that they are not supposed to do anything to effect the course of cultural development. The Doctor does a lot of that too, on some planets he is a legend remembered for thousands of years for something he has done. When things get really tough for the Time Lords they sometimes fall back on the Doctor to do their dirty and unethical work for them.

TEMERITY/Tom Perry: Aside from a lot of very interesting material the most interesting thing in this issue is the idea of publishing fanhistory as it happens - by doing annual summaries of events in fandom by reprinting reports, articles and so on the year they happen, or every second or third year. I like it a lot and I'd just love to see such a thing, it may be the only way of keeping up with the million and one things that happen in fandom these days. But then I get the impression that fandom over there is just too big for even such a venture these days - it may still be possible in Australia and perhaps in the UK and in Europe.

Here in Australia I sometimes get the impression that I know most people in fandom and then the Sydney fans go and set up a rapid apa and the fans come out of the woodwork and I've not heard of a good half of them.

But mainly speaking these people who come out of the woodwork for a year or two and then go off to play with their wives or their train sets or whatever don't do too much to change the course of fan history. I suppose that it is true that the average fan life is only two or three years but it seems that more and more I can conduct my fanac in a bunch of people that I've known for maybe even ten years. The other day I was looking through some old letters from 1968 where I as a little neofan had published my first issue and, having picked the names of some fanzines some place I wrote off asking if they would trade. The people I wrote off to were Linda Eyster (Bushyager), Peter Gill, Jim Young, Roy Tackett, Hank Luttrell, John D Berry, Bob Vardeman and Michael Ward. The letters were dated 26th April and yet when I visited the US in '74 I met Linda, Jim, Roy, Hank, John & Bob - which seems to be a fairly high percentage just for names picked out of a hat. And, by golly, a fanzine from Michael Ward arrived in the mail only the day before yesterday. So can anybody tell me what has happened with Peter Gill, just to tidy things up a little.

The only qualm I have with publishing fan history as it happens is that in fact you are making it happen in a certain direction by your selections. If you like the same things as me (and from this contribution I think that is the case) all well and good, but if somebody else were to do the job they may pick many different points of emphasis and the direction becomes one that I was not involved in. Because Australian fandom has been comparatively small (there would not have been more than a couple of dozen of us active in 1968) the history should be easy to trace, and perhaps with the help of John Foyster and John Bangsund I may get around to it. I, naturally, tend to think of history as that which happened in Australian fandom pre 1966 when I got involved. It is difficult to remember that for most people anything up until 1975 is history.

HORIZONS/Harry Warner: Good grief Harry, Naracoorte isn't in any remote part of Australia, well no more remote than any country town is from any other. In a band stretching west from Melbourne slightly up towards Adelaide you'll come across a township or so every twenty or thirty miles. There is the Little Desert which is only little in comparison to the Big Desert to the north which separates a lot of land running from Bordertown to Taliem Bend on the Melbourne-Adelaide highway and from Kaniva to Naracoorte north-south. Valma and I and her mother once got lost in the edges of the Little Desert driving from Naracoorte to Natimuk (but we ended up at Kaniva which was better than nothing) and that was only about a fifty minute drive. From Natimuk to Horsham is no more than another twenty minutes and from Horsham to Melbourne is three or four hours by road from Melbourne (depending on how fast you want to go) and before you know it you're at a WorldCon or something.

No Harry, the South East corner of Australia is fairly well filled up, by our standards.

Even before you made the suggestion that we vote in an Australian officialdom to FAPA to help me save on the postage bill, I'd done it. I may have been the only one from Australia

to vote in the elections this time and the fact that you will find that there was a vote for one Australian in each category and the vote counter says that somebody used an Australian ballot then John Bangsund was not to wonder too long about who had voted for him for OE before somebody smart like John Foyster dobed me in. Next year I'm going to make sure that we've all prepared and ready to vote for the good of the country. If Tom Perry was earlier worrying about Treekies getting the WorldCon and never giving it back, can you imagine what will happen to FAPA when we Australian fans get our little grubbies on it. Actually though, you're welcome to all the hard work.

NOTES FROM ARINAM/Roy Tackett: I may be one of your younger fans but count me in the oldies who are more interested in the science than the literature side of sf. Literature when applied to sf is the "carrier" for all sorts of lovely ideas and I'd much rather have a good idea than a good character any day. The real trouble is that I have a hard time keeping up with science, even buying New Scientist religiously every week I tend not to finish reading issues just at the important part or read the article on ecology rather than the one on particle physics because I'm too lazy to really concentrate on what's happening. And the astronomy that that magazine comes up with... one of these days I'm going to take the time off to really try to understand what's happening in that field. At the same time I'm going to also write that history of Australian fandom and finish off the work on my Big Book of Planes, perhaps.

SNICKERSNEE/Bob Silverberg: Yesterday was stinking hot (perhaps up to 40) and I was out doing the shopping and thinking to myself that it was just the kind of weather I liked, hot but with just a breeze to take off the sweat. Today, on the other hand, it's been as humid as hell and raining all day. It's what you call Melbourne weather where, as the man says "if you don't like it, wait half an hour and it'll come along for you." California has always sounded like a nice kind of place to visit, actually if the wet season over there is our summer then I could quite happily spend six months of the year over there and six here up at Dimboola where the heat is real heat.

Anyhow, you can write a book anytime you like as far as I'm concerned. Actually what I've read on your next work so far sounds very nice, and while I'm glad to read that you're getting your worth for it I hate to think how much I'm going to get paid for it... there's no hope of it being serialised in OMNI I suppose...? Just asking...

SAMBO/Sam Martinez: Thanks for the info on the old SUPERMAN TV series which can still be seen around Melbourne from time to time. I was never a great fan of them but by and large I'd say that the plot in a half hour episode was no more complex (or less for that matter) than the epic that I mentioned earlier in this issue. The thing about the SUPERMAN film was that even though there were lots of "special effects" they didn't look all that special - I mean that when the Deathstar in STAR WARS gets to blow up the planet or when space ships battle it out it looks spectacular but when Superman grabs a helicopter out of thin air or the Golden Gate starts to fall to bits in an earthquake it just looks sort of naturally like the real thing. But I bet that a model of the Golden Gate would cost a lot more to make than a model of the Death Star.

MUMBLE GUTTER/Tim Marion: These days I think I'd just about rather get a FAPA mailing in the post than anything else. I really enjoy getting letters from my friends but there is still a lot of stuff in FAPA that just doesn't turn up anywhere else and there is also a sense of quality in a lot of material which there doesn't seem to be anywhere else. Earlier the new OE was writing about the huge LASFAPA mailings that come out monthly, they are perhaps interesting but if the people who are contributing are anything like me they are going to be putting in quantity and not quality and it must all get uninteresting in the end.

Of course when it comes to deciding whether I'd prefer a fanzine to a letter I'd rather receive a fanzine that read like a letter - but there aren't too many fan writers around who write well enough to give that impression in 150 copies.

NOTES FROM ARINAM/Roy Tackett: Traditional book reviews might leave out the surprise ending but I often wish that they wouldn't. There's nothing worse than wading through a book because you have been told that the pile of garbage has a super surprise ending and when you get there you find it's the ending you guessed at on page two. Anyhow, I'm the kind of person who looks at the last page just to make sure that the hero is still alive and that the thing will end happily and that it is worth reading.

The sorts of book reviews I like best are the ones that say "this story is well written and it is about.." and then they give you a plot outline.

I enjoy flying in airliners and watching the wings flex, the 747 is of course the best for this sort of lark, you only have to worry when the rivets start to pop.

AND SO THE END of another fabulous FAPA mailing - I'm glad that they don't come more often than once every three months.

Since nature abhors a vacuum and I abhor wasting the space on paper that I have to send anyhow we will have a book review to fill up this issue. I am not a mad keen book reviewer and in fact only tend to review books which get sent to me for free since I figure I owe the publisher something for its trouble. The book this time is:

THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK, edited by Colin Lester for Pierrot Publishing Limited/394pp/paperback/2.95 Pounds Sterling but I don't know what that will be in real money.

Okay, this is the kind of book that you dip into, either to improve your general knowledge by reading parts at random or to actually find the answer to some question that is bothering you. So far as I can tell the book is fairly complete in its information since I've also done some dipping just to find out if the book knows some of the things that I think I do..

There are 29 sections, most are categories such as "Fanzines" or "Awards" or "Music & recordings" and in fact about the only part of the whole wide field of sf and fantasy and fandom that isn't covered in some way or another is "Writers" - a fairly understandable situation when you look at the work that people like Don Tuck go to although there is a section on "Pseudonyms."

Although there are more and more books being published these days which claim to in some way contain the secret of what sf is all about, this book only claims to tell you what's going on at the moment and for the uninitiated there is an article at the beginning of most of the sections to ease you into the subject. For example; section 26 on APAs begins with a brief explanation of how they came to exist and how they operate (one of the better explanations I've seen) followed by an editorial note on how the information was collected and how the information might be used, and then the listing of apas in alphabetic order. ANZAPA (The Glorious Antipodean Apa) comes first and there are 31 organisations listed including FAPA. I note that SAPS is not listed but this is a minor point and I rather a book which lists only 31 apas instead of none at all.

The fanzine listing seems to be fairly good, by which I mean that the listings of my fanzines are up to date (or were when this book went to print) and some of the others that I glanced at are likewise. The listing of conventions makes me realise that if I were in the US of A I may never have to put typer to stencil to be a hyperactive fan these days and even if the convention weren't enough the number of fan organisations that are listed is staggering.

If a person were so minded I'm sure that he could spend many happy hours going through this book marking all the mistakes - I wouldn't be surprised if the editor were to thank such people for their trouble if they sent the list to him as well.

I don't know who is going to distribute this book in the US or here in Australia, but if you see a copy you'll probably find it worth buying. Librarians will probably also find it very useful on their shelves as a current listing of what's going on and a listing of most of the sources for information and other things like magazine subs. If nothing else, in a few years it will serve as a handy little document to help you remember all the exciting things that were happening about now.

My only real criticism of this yearbook is that it is supposed to be an annual thing and yet there is no place on the cover where it says that this book is for the year 1979 - and after this has been published for fifty issues that's the kind of thing that you really have to have on the cover. They don't put the year on the outside of the annual OBSERVERS BOOK OF AIRCRAFT and it's enough to drive you mad..

Oh well, enough for reviews and mailing comments and all the rest. Time to read through this to find out if it makes any sense and to perhaps correct some of the spelling Elizabeth. See you all in about three months.

PRINTED MATTER

SENDER
Leigh Edmonds
PO Box 103
Brunswick
Victoria 3056
AUSTRALIA