

RATAPLAN SEVEN



Rataplan 7

CONTENTS:

GEORGE

Editorial

FROM COLUMBIA

Lesleigh Luttrell

HARLEY AND THE POETS

Nate Bucklin

THE COMORG DINKUM CITY CONTEST

Bill Wright

Art: Cover - Gerald Carr Page 5 - Jeff Schalles Page 7 -
Lindsay Cox Page 8 - Treay Jeeves Page 12 - George Foster
Page 17 - George Foster Page 20 - stolen from newspaper

RATAPLAN is published every so often by Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 74, Balaclava, Victoria 3183, AUSTRALIA. It is available for trade, letters of comment, contributions and all the other usual stuff. At the moment contributions of either words or pictures would be most gratefully accepted as, having been out of print for so long, RATAPLAN is suffering malnutrition in both these aspects.

George

BACK YOU SWINE' BACK!

I see the drift now. I've been getting fanzines for the last few years and all the clues have been there but either through ignorance or a blith ability to ignore the facts, I didn't notice what was going on.

Everybody says that fandom is getting bigger these days and they are probably right about it. There are so many fanzines around these days that nobody can get to read them all even though Harry Warner tries. Therefore there was nobody who could claim to know what was really going on in the whole of fandom and it is no wonder that up until now nobody has been able to pinpoint the source of the ill wind blowing through fandom.

This afternoon I was reading GRANFALLOON 14, in particular the Jeff Glencannon fanzine reviews, when all the pieces seemed to fall into place for me.

Who knows when the cancerous growth began to propagate itself? I myself suspect it was back in the days of the formation of the N3F and maybe even as far back as the Science Fiction League (towards pre-COMORG organizations incase some readers don't know). The organization of fandom has always been an insidious thing which has threatened to engulf and overthrow the free will which has been the essence of fandoms purity.

In the early days of the N3F and various other notorious organizations, US fandom learned to guard it's freedom by ignoring these creations and in more recent days Australian fans have learned the same tactics in their battle against COMORG. Fandom would seem to have been free from more than a taint of organization in the form of apa's and Convention Committees, but no. There are Secret Masters at work who have seen that overt organization does not work and have set out to enslave fandom by other means which I have chosen to call "authorised fandom".

The Dick Geis fanzine SF REVIEW was the first to take up these new tactics when it printed extensive book reviews which soon led to the cult of the "authorised book". Books which were given a favourable review became virtually required reading for the whole of fandom. Other faneds soon saw that publishing book reviews ensured a good readership and they, willingly or otherwise, joined the cult. Soon the Secret Masters had control over all the books that fandom read.

In later days the trend has been taken even further by Charlie Brown in LOCUS so that we are now faced with the problem of "Authorised Hugo Winners".

In time the interest of fans once again swung back to fannishness but the Secret Masters had anticipated this move and were there waiting. When the new fans discovered that they were faans it was the Masters who defined for them what a faan was.

It is hard (and possibly slanderous) to say whether Arnie Katz is a Secret Master or a puppet of the Masters but in the long

run it is no matter for we now see endless tracts emanating from the Katz circle, all defining by word and by example exactly what a truefan is. What truefan these days does not sing along with his duper and throw the occasional paper-tasting party? Why, fandom has even parodied it's own problem by creating what it calls the "Arnie Katz Approved Neofan".

And now, just today, I have seen the final part of the scheme for I have realized that the Secret Masters are moving to take over complete control of the fanzines. This began innocuously enough with the simple fanzine review; an age old and, until recently, harmless occupation. But now we have people like Jerry Lapidus and Jeff Glencannon (in GRANFALLOON) writing for pages and pages about what a good fanzine is, how it is produced and exactly what it is that goes to make a good contents page. If one of these new breed of fanzine critics does not agree with the way a particular fanzine looks or reads he gives it thumbs down in the most damning way and if the poor faned doesn't gaffiate for shame nobody will touch his rag anyhow.

Thus I predict that within the coming eighteen months we will see the advent of the "authorised fanzine". It will be a sad day when your fanzine must be approved by somebody in New York or L.A. or Canberra.

From

then on it will be a simple matter for the Secret Masters to have fans approved and everybody in fandom regulated by different licenses.

After passing an initial test you are given a six month probationary "Authorised Neofan" permit which entitles you to make a nuisance of yourself at conventions, write lousy letters of comment and publish an "Authorised Crudzine". At the other end of the scale will be the "Authorised BNF" with a record of achievements as long as his arm and a permit to publish "Hugo Nomination Class Fanzines".

And before we go any further I had better say:

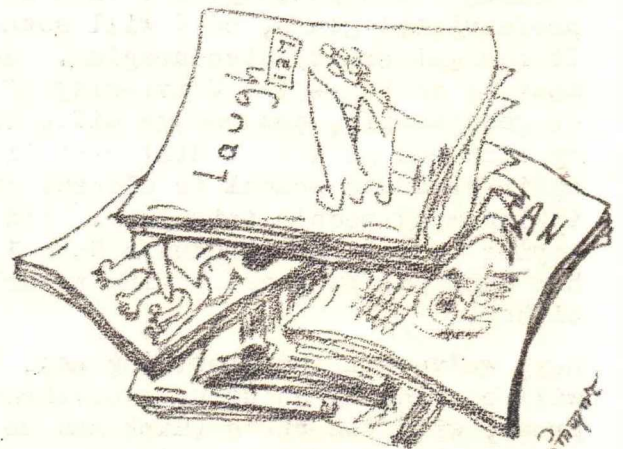
LUTTRELL FOR DUFF!

I have known Lesleigh for the last four years and she has always impressed me as a good fan and a good person. I have been a member of APA 45 for as long as she has been the Official Editoreess and she has always done a wonderful job.

In that time she and her husband Hank have produced STARLING, one of the best fanzines around.

In voting for Lesleigh for DUFF you will be supporting a very good candidate, the best we could hope to have at SYNCON '72.

Please vote for Lesleigh, she's the best.



Old Fanzines
never die... they just
end up in neofans'
collections..

From Columbia

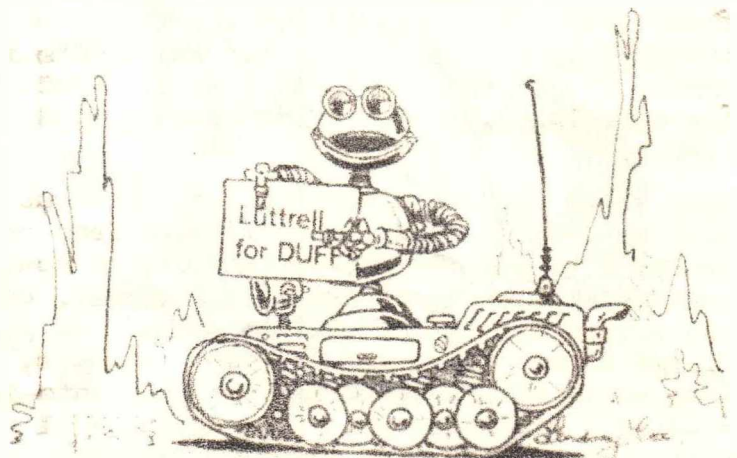
I have come to the conclusion that getting into Graduate School is just one big hassle. It would be alright if I could just pick a few schools based on complete informatmon and apply to them. Then in April, when the financial aid offers come out, I could just pick the one that gave the best deal. But it's not that simple. In the first place, it is very difficult to get information. A lot of schools have decided to charde a dollar for their catalogue this year, and I really can't afford to be sending dollars off to a place I might not even be interested in. And when you talk to people, you get all sorts of conflicting reports about the different schools. And you have to decide just exactly what you want to specialize in before you pick a school. I don't mean just know you want to go into Physical Anthropology instead of just saying anthropology. I mean deciding if you are more interested in population genetics, primate behaviour, serology, or any of the 1001 different areas of physical anthropology. After much thought, I decided I would pretend to be interested in fossil man and human osteology. You see, what I'd really like to do is to get a Ph. D., get a teaching job at a university, write text books, and do the kind of little studies that don't usually get done because they aren't very exciting and might end up not even being very useful (but I am of the opinion that any well done research will be of use to someone, if it hasn't been done before). But you can't go around telling people stuff like that. I know when I start filling out applications I will have to make up some grandiose professional goals, so I will sound just like the rest of the applicants. It can get pretty discouraging. But I think I've decided which school I want to go to -- the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. They have a lot of good people, and enough different types of people so that I can change my mind and go into a different field after I get there. Unfortunately their graduate school is already overcrowded and they probably won't be taking many people this year. And that's the way things go when you are trying to get into Graduate School. (And the little letters reminding you how many Ph. D.'s are having trouble finding jobs don't help much either.

Hey, we've started something new, Fabulous Faanish Columbis Fandom. You will be reading about us everywhere from now on. Our group is really great, with two BNF's (Hank and me, of course), two Arnie Katz approved neofans (Terry Hughes and Rick Stoker), one eldritch horror (Jim Turner), one sercon fan (Creath Thorne - how'd he get in there) and hordes of fringe fans. How could we lose? And yes, we have fantastic conversat-ions which will soon be appearing in toto in every fanzine in the country. But since you are friends, I'll warn you. This is an evial plot. We are going to build up Columbia, and make it sound good enough to rival even New York fandom. We will attract hordes of fans to

Columbia, all hoping to join our magic circle. And then at the end of the year, we'll leave town! Everything will collapse without us. And coming soon will be Fabulous Fannish Ann Arbor (?) Fandom. Who knows -- the next step might be to start bidding committees wherever we move and leave as soon as the bid is won, start Hugo nominated fanzines everywhere and leave as soon as they lose. What fiendish plans!

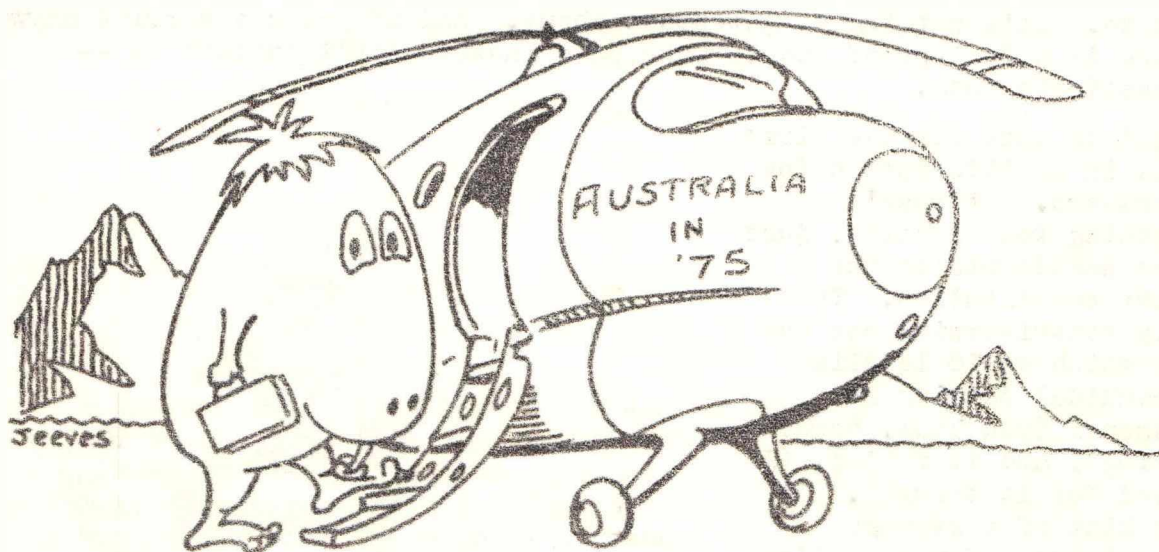
We saw Hellstrom Chronicle recently. In a lot of ways, it isn't a very good movie. Certainly the photography of insects and spiders is incredible, but the surrounding framework, with the supposed Dr. Hellstrom telling how insects will conquer the world is just not very good, mainly because it is based on nice-sounding but entirely false logic. Dr. Hellstrom of the movie contends that it will eventually come down to a contest between men and insects for possession of the world, and insects will win. Now it is quite possible that insects will outlast us, but not very scary. After all, insects are an entire class of animal, and man is only a species, or at most a genus of animal. It just isn't fair to compare man with insects, or dinosaurs for that matter (dinosaurs are basically included in two orders of the class reptilia). Classes last longer than orders, orders than families and families than genera both in fact and by definition. The class Insecta did arise before our class the mammals, and so probably will last longer, since it takes fantastic changes to wipe out entire classes of animals. If one wants to include spiders with the insects, that means pitting the Phylum Arthropoda against the Chordates. I expect both phyla are about equal, being probably the two most successful, considering that both have been pretty successful on land and in water. As for the dinosaurs, mammals aren't very much younger than reptiles. And the orders that constituted the dinosaurs proper lasted a little over 100 million years. Of the mammals, insectivores, our oldest still living order have lasted that long, and primates, one of the older mammalian orders have been around 70 or 80 million years. Sure Homo sapiens probably won't last as long as the insects and the dinosaurs, but there is absolutely no reason to expect him to. It's nothing to get upset about. And if you get worried anyway, there is a fool-proof way to make sure insects don't outlast us -- domesticate them.

I got to vote for the first time in my life just a few weeks ago. It wasn't anything too exciting, just some amendments to the state constitution. The only controversial one was one which would legalize paramutuel betting in Missouri (you know, horse racing), and it failed. (I voted for it though). It was kind of a strange experience. You see, I've wanted to be able to vote since I was nine years old.



I always decided how I would have voted if I could have in every election, even to the point of filling out sample ballots printed in the paper before such things as primary elections. I couldn't really understand people who didn't want to vote. Sometimes in highschool I used to get into arguments with people who didn't think they as nearly 18-year-olds would want to vote, or feel capable of doing so. It is really not difficult to vote intelligently. It is really very easy to find out the things and people that are being voted on. All this might sound as if I believe the vote has some sort of magic power. Well, I know it doesn't. A lot of the time one person's vote doesn't mean anything. But if you did some homework and then voted, you would atleast have some idea what's going on. And, as badly as it works at the national level, I really believe democracy can work at the local level. And it's not very hard to get interested in local politics. It's your home, you live there, and just about everything your city or county government does is going to effect you. And the nice thing is, you can do an awful lot of stuff that will effect your government. No city councilman, etc., is going to away with saying he intends to ignore a large number of his constituents (as Nixon said at the demonstrations last year). Before lowering the voting age, they could ignore us locally, but not anymore. And they know it. And you know what -- some of them even like it. Our county clerk just can't register enough students to please himself, and after years of gerrymandering, it finally looks like there will be an entire city ward that includes just the largely student areas of Columbia. And that means we have the opportunity of making this place into a really nice town. I bet you could have the opportunity too, if you wanted it.

— Lesleigh Luttrell



Harley and the Poets

The first I'd heard about the Helena job was about two weeks ago, when I walked into Dianne's place in Hopkins (where we practice (Dianne's and her mother's, rather) and caught Frenchy just hanging up the phone.

"That was Tim Kehr," Frenchy said. "He wants to know if we'll play in Helena, Montana, on October 18."

"How much?" My question.

"He said he'd guarantee us \$450 after commissions," said Frenchy.

Of the few jobs Tim Kehr has found for us, the majority were actually booked through Harry Beacom Associates. Tim's arrangement with them and us that the total percentage taken out by both bookers together will be 20%; if the job is such that Beacom requires 20%, Tim will get nothing. If Tim books a job without Beacom, he will sometimes take out only 10%, sometimes 20%. This being a big job, let's assume Beacom booked it. (I still don't know one way or the other.) \$450 is 80% of what? Of \$562.50, is what.

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him I'd call back in fifteen minutes," said Frenchy. "He has to know that soon, though. Will you do it?"

"We don't have anything for Friday?"

"Not yet. And we can always tell David Anthony not to get us anything: there shouldn't be any hard feelings." David Anthony is supposed to be our booking agency, but can't be counted on to keep us busy.

"Will the bus be ready?" School bus, '55 International, having a new and more powerful engine put in it.

"Tomorrow," said Frenchy.

"I'll do it."

So thus was Tim Kehr told, on the say-so of three of the Circus 13's five or six members. Yes, I do so know how many members the band has; "five or six" is exactly what I meant.

The search for an organist/pianist was continuing. Dave Maslow, Ken Gager's replacement, gave notice a month ago, and despite good intentions on his part found it impossible to play out the jobs we had booked; we had so little notice of this that Jim (2nd guitar) and Steve (drums) had the equipment half set up in Baudette, Minn. one night before Frenchy (bass) Dianne (lead vocals) and I (guitar) showed up to inform them that Dave couldn't make it. We played half the night without organ, and I played on the songs where it was necessary, and in a couple of places

reached down and played the organ solo and finished the song on guitar... so when we talked to Tim we didn't know how many of us there would be in Montana, or whether we'd have filled out our sound if we didn't add on the keyboard. (We weren't really very good in Baudette.)

So in the midst of that add trying to get an audition tape sent off to some record company in New York, there came a Monday - last Monday - the one just before the job. The school bus was back and running; Frenchy and company were transferring some equipment from the U-Haul trailer to the back of the bus, and putting some of it on the lawn to go to the basement where we practiced, and there stands some kid with black curly hair and glasses.

"Nate," Jim queried, "did you tell Ed to come tonight?" Ed is an organist we were thinking of auditioning; I'd been in touch with him.

"Hardly," I answered. "I said to wait next week after we'd played the job; and Ed has a clod anyhow. So I think we decided to put the audition off."

"Well, this is Ed," Jim said. "He said you told him to come tonight."

"We might as well audition you, then," I said. "What do you think, Frenchy?" Frenchy is also group leader; I'm group loudmouth. When Frenchy is really hassled and there's a lot on his mind he can make quick decisions by waiting until I say something and agreeing. If there's a major problem, on the other hand, with the group divided. I wait until Frenchy says something and agree with him. As things were, I said, "What do you think?" and Frenchy said, "Fine with me." All right.

"Do you have your equipment here?" somebody asked Ed.

"No," Ed said; "I didn't bring it. Nate said I wouldn't have to."

"That was last weel," I said. "We had to give that organ back to its owner. You won't need to bring an amplifier, but we don't have a keyboard here at all."

"But all I've got for a keyboard is a Wurlitzer electric piano," Ed reminded me.

Ed didn't sound like an excuse-maker over the phone...

"I'll drive back to your place with you and get it," Jim decided. I'd already told them where Ed lived (near Lake Calhoun, about ten miles into Minneapolis from Dianne's), and Jim doesn't really like carrying equipment.

So Frenchy and Steve and I got the stuff into the basement and set up; and Jim and Ed got back in about forty minutes; and we got down to business.

First song was "Somebody to Love" as possibly the best known song on our regular list. "Do you know it?" "Well, I've heard it - I should be able to fake through it." Pause. "Key of G flat?" "G flat minor," I corrected. Exactly like any other audition; with him talking and responding like a dozen other young organists who'd been nice guys and hesitant and who'd flunked. So we played through the song, with Ed blowing one cord and demonstrating a lot of technical ability, and then:

"You said you were a Jefferson Airplane freak. Can you sing 'Wild Tyme'?"

"Well, I've really got a cold, I don't know if I can sing at all today..."

"Can you hit the notes? I mean, all we really need is an idea - I'm sure we can tell a good voice with a coid from a bad voice, and I'd like to know what your singing ear is like."

"Well, I've never sung or played the song once before, but I've heard it a lot, I can try it..."

I'd been playing 2nd guitar and singing half-lead (with Dianne), at least since Dave quit; with Ed trying the lead vocal, I didn't have much to do, and was probably in the best position to pay Ed close attention. So Jim and I did the two-interlocking-guitar beginning; and the song began.

Dianne usually gives singing all she's got, at least lately; Jim gets lost in his lead work, and Frenchy concentrates on his bass almost to the extent of fighting it. But when I heard Ed hit the first words, the first phrase, and realised that I was actually hearing what I thought I was hearing, I was filled with enough joy that failing to share it would have been really frustrating. Wow... Firm, young, resolute, and blending remarkably well with Dianne's... and the fact that the melody is largely improvised made his successful singing of it even more remarkable, not to mention the fact that the record has three interlocking parts and we were only singing two and he did a more effective job of changing from one to the other than either Dave or Ken had ! ("One or the other" because Dianne took the top part relatively closely off the record, leaving Ed a choice of two.) I added my voice in song later...

What am I doing? Three sentences ago I was overcome by joy. I didn't even tell you what I did. Well, you see, Steve was over in his corner playing drums and grooving. I shot my look at him, and he lit up and flashed the same kind of impression back at me. That's what happened.

So here I am thinking, well look everybody, we're playing 1000 miles away next Saturday and we've got only three nights total to practice for it and the first one's almost over with. So Frenchy is the one who actually says it.

"Well," Frenchy probably didn't say, but Ed had said it often enough that night so it might have rubbed off on Frenchy (it did on me), "Let's not take any more time. I'm sure we've all made up our minds."

"Which way?" I said, softly. Hoping.

"Isn't it obvious?" said Dianne. Smiling. She's pretty good at it.

The next four or five sentences were fantastic joyful vibrations. I don't know if you'd recognise all the vibrations... but we were almost a dream come true for Ed, who really dug vocal harmony groups and had never found a band who could do it adequately for him to play in; and he for us.

After that Ed played us part of a song he wrote ("I can't play it all, because I write all the parts at once and I'd have to show you all of your parts for it to sound right.") and goofed around on guitar a little bit. His guitar is weak, but that song of his was something else. And then we got down to work again:

The song that looked the most promising that we'd been working on for the audition tape was my original "Home again". I've written two songs by this title; the one that made the tape was what I always thought of as

"the other one". Very simple; very paranoid. The tape had been just one guitar plus harmony (Steinburg-agent thinking that Dianne's voice and my writing would be adequate to sell the group); Dianne, however, wanted to do the song on stage, and she and Frenchy thought the song had it in it to be a show-stopper. So that was the first order of business...



The actual retelling of the next hour, and of the following two days, would be heavy on the practices, which were merely hard working routine. We decided to practice and perform without Ed on Tues.-Wed.-Sat; considering the complexity of a lot of our stuff (true of almost every professional band around here) we'd never get him worked in in two days. But probably the big head-turning thing came on Tuesday, I think. On Tuesday as on Monday, I got there before Jim and Steve, and came straight in upstairs.

Dianne told me, "Jim's planning on making a big speech tonight."

"What about?"

"He doesn't think we should play the job," she explained.

"Why not?" Considering Jim had said it, I took it calmly.

"Because it's not practical," she amplified. "He'll tell you when he gets here. Would you care to have dinner with us?"

That was not word for word. Dianne, her mother and Frenchy are genuinely hospitable and have enough well bred finesse not to use a dinner invitation merely to close off a conversation; and Jim's arguments don't sound right coming from anyone else, which means that I would have trouble remembering what Dianne said in direct proportion to the trouble I had grasping it when she said it. So anyhow the four of us were finishing off dinner when Jim showed up (as late as I had been early, but not as late as Steve was to prove to be), said a few words, ambled over to Mrs. Crouch's new borrowed vibrating chair, preambled a bit more and launched into his argument.

"In the first place," quoth Jim, "we could be playing two nights this weekend - in town - and clear a lot more money. Marsh has us a job for Saturday already, and I'm sure he can get us one for Friday."

"And in the second place," he continued, "the job isn't worth it. In general because the bus might not make it, and what do we do if it breaks down? And besides that we'd be lucky to clear more than forty dollars each for the trip."

"We'll clear more than that," somebody said.

"And besides that," Jim kept going, "we're going to get into union trouble if we play the job, because it's a Beacom job, and I called up the union and asked if we could play the job, and they said Beacom was still on the defaulters' list. And I checked my copy of the International Musician, and he's still on the list."

"There's no way they can make trouble for us," said Frenchy. "It's not Beacom's name on the contract; it's Tim Kehr's."

"You mean Kehr is a booking agent?" Jim asked incredulously, Kehr's been representing himself as an agent of Columbia and ~~as~~ our personal agent, and getting bookings for only us and a band called Mushroom.

"Kehr is a promotion man for Columbia," Frenchy said patiently. "But he's got a booker's license, and he had his own agency a few years ago and he still gets jobs. I don't even know if this is a Beacom job."

"What'll you do if I call up the union tomorrow and tell them we're playing a job through Beacom?" Jim pressed.

"It strikes me as being a pretty low thing to do," Dianne put in. "If everybody in the group is determined to play the job, I don't see why you should want to call the union and make them stop us."

"If it comes right down to going or not going," Jim admitted glumly, "I guess I'd go along with you and not stay behind. But I still can't see why you want to play the job in the first place."

"We're not in the business just for the money," Frenchy said, "and you've said you are, so I don't know if we can even explain it to you."

"It's because it's a concert," Dianne tried anyway, "and we're playing with the First Edition, and we've always wanted to play a concert and finally getting the chance really means a lot."

"Yes," said Jim, "but how do you know the bus will make it?"

"There's a brand new engine in it," I reminded him, "and there's a six-month guarantee on the engine. That also means they'll pay for damages if we don't make it."

Jim replied, "Yes, but what do we do if the bus conks out in the middle of nowhere?"

Frenchy said, "What would we do in any case if the bus conked out in the middle of nowhere? Or, for that matter, what would we do if your car pulling a trailer conked out in the middle of nowhere?"

And Jim replied, "Yes, but I've got a feeling the bus isn't going to make it."

And I said, "Point one; they wouldn't have guaranteed the engine for six months if they didn't think it would last. Point two; we're covered if it doesn't."

"But wouldn't you rather play two nights in town for more money?" Jim wondered.

I don't think anybody came out and said, "Frankly, no." I think somebody said "Not really." Whatever the answer was, it was short and effectively negative.

Flashback: I did Jim an injustice earlier. His reply did contain somewhere, between Frenchy's answer and Dianne's, the statement, "I do like to play..." My own interpretation was, not so much that Jim was being totally mercenary, as that Jim is a totally indefatigable hard worker who enjoys luxuries and having fun expensively, and that music may be the only area where you can enjoy luxuries and have fun expensively without having to stop working. I did not mean to imply a deep insult

to Jim's orientation to music; Frenchy may have meant to at the time, but he doesn't know any better.

We got into the subject of trip finances. Jim said, "Figure a hundred dollars for gas." That immediately met with opposition. Frenchy said, "We figured eighty at work." I did some figuring: "1200 miles - twelve miles to the gallon?" "Round trip 2400 miles," somebody said, and "Eight miles to the gallon," Frenchy said. Thirty cents to the gallon, three hundred gallons: ninety dollars. That leaves \$360 of what we were guaranteed.

"But then there's food," Jim said. Jim accents every word he says. Visualise that. The obvious way of saying the last sentence is twenty times more casual than the way Jim actually said it.

"We'd be spending money on that anyway," I told him.

"Estimate ten dollars per person per day," Jim said. He must have been just about ready to tell us how much that would come to and how much we would then have left over, but Dianne, Frenchy and I jumped on him verbally simultaneously.

"Not that much!" said Dianne, appalled.

"We'll be bringing food from home, though," Frenchy said. "And we'll have a stove on the bus."

"I've been averaging 75¢ per day on my own budget," I said. "If we plan it right I don't see why we should really have to go above that."

"I've been with you on road jobs," Jim said, "and you eat a lot more than that."

"Okay," I shrugger, with my face at least, "triple that."

"And that's still a far cry from ten dollars," Dianne finished.

Somewhere in here Steve came in. "What's the big confrontation about?"

"Jim doesn't want to go to Montana," Frenchy said.

"We're going though, aren't we?" Steve said hopefully.

It looked that way, and Jim gave in.

We must have spent as much time taking the trip as we did worrying about it and planning it. I say it that way because we couldn't have spent more time than we did on the preliminaries, and the trip could have both been and seemed longer; and I think the main reason the trip didn't seem longer was Arf.

Arf doesn't at all correlate with Frenchy's German Shepherd lady whose name was Sheba, but maybe I'll tell you about Sheba. Frenchy said to me Wednesday night while we were driving around trying to get the bus's heaters fixed, "I'd really like to take Sheba along on the trip, if nobody objects."

I objected. If I was going to spend four days cooped up in the presence of five other living objects, the other living objects had better be humans, so that they understand when I say "Could you quiet down? I'm trying to sleep", and so that I don't get physically contacted to death

when I'm not looking. We'd also have to make extra stops for dogwalking, etc. When Dianne got the word that I'd vetoed the suggestion she said, "Why not?" and implied further "Sheba is one of the friendliest, most lovable pups you could imagine!" Big deal. I've met Sheba. She's a gas. Not for a trip though. Hell, wouldn't have taken Morton (my cat)... and I've known him all his life and he's a lot smaller and quieter than Sheba. Morton wouldn't be happy, and neither would we. So we brought Arf.

Arf is human. You can wake him up in the morning by saying "Ah-URF! Ah-URF!" People don't usually call him Bark or Bow-wow or Woff. Sometimes they call him by his real name, which is Ralph. He is clean-cut freak type; good friend of our drummer Steve. Turns out later Arf is 22-almost-23, 3 years older than Steve is, and by 2½ years the oldest person on the trip. But wow, what a youth at heart. He and Jim got a whole "mountain dialect" (actually sounding something like German or Italian accent) routine up that proved to be endlessly hilarious, especially when Arf threw in the wrong malapropisms. Visualize the guy: tall and thin with tall and thin serious face, black hair straight and fairly short, sideburns, mustache, goatee; when his sideburns and goatee have grown longer he'll have three things under his chin to braid. Estimate two more years before that happens. Very French looking. (Last name Champeau.) More so than even Frenchy, who is half German. And a voice like Steve Stills, and no trouble improvising harmonies and words. He and Steve and I would spend up to an hour non-stop on the couch or the floor singing 3-part harmonies to songs we didn't even know we knew, and sometimes just making up things including words and chords. Jim sang too, of course, sometimes; Frenchy, who doesn't sing on stage (maybe soon - his voice is getting more and more under control), singing along, usually either melody or the most obvious harmony harmony part. And one night as I was trying to rest I heard Dianne join in. Joy. (Dianne is sometimes so aloof and sometimes dependent on Frenchy and nobody else. But Dianne coming down off imaginary pedestal and singing with people can be a major contribution to general happy; even more so than with her singing on stage.)

So that contained a lot of the first part of the trip: sitting around on couch, cot and floor and other people lying on bunks and everybody singing. We didn't get on the road until around 5 pm. Thursday; Frenchy had wanted to leave at noon, Jim had said that he wouldn't even be there until three, and actual starting time came out to be 5.30 ish. I was hoping that the four dollars I had in my pocket would last me for the trip; but I'd forgotten about having to pick up stage clothes at the cleaners, \$1.80. Oh well... and started munching on home-made (Dianne's) chocolate chip cookies, to help keep me from hunger en route. Weather was nice. Roads were clear. Everything all right. North and then across; Interstate 94 as a large part of the route.

The cot I tried to sleep on didn't seem designed for it, and one of the heaters was roasting me as I bumped my head on the wood supports. I spent a lot of the time perched next to the driver on my knees, watching the view. Frenchy did most of the driving during the first night and we landed for breakfast in Dickinson, North Dakota, around 9.30, having averaged just under 40 miles per hour.

Don's Cafe in Dickinson is recommended, incidentally. The breakfast menu has nice selections and prices; and there was plenty of science

fiction on a bookrack near the door (I was frustrated at not being able to pick up "A Gun for Dinosaur and other stories" by L. Sprague deCamp, for 95¢, but I still had a few more days to plan for). Steve crawled back into his sleeping bag; Jim and Arf and I threw him out of the bus, bag and all. There was nobody around to watch Steve crawl, underworn, out of the sleeping bag and back into the bus but some girl walked across the lot where we had the bus parked only about ten seconds later, and then Frenchy and Dianne showed back up and the bus got moving again.

Dickinson to Glendive, Montana, is a nice road. Was the Theodore Roosevelt park state or national? I can't remember. We stopped there and looked for a while, and Dianne kept saying things about putting a film in her camera and taking a picture of everybody, but she never did. Steve, who had never been out of Iowa-Minnesota-Wisconsin, was really wiped out by the view. (Painted Canyon type of thing, with rocks.) For that matter so was everybody else.

Glendive Montana to Miles City is something else again. Two lanes up and down hills; and the bus slowed down to under 10 miles per hour for some of them. We were getting convinced that something was wrong with the bus, and in both Glendive and Miles City had it looked at. Miles City took a while. (There's a gas station plus cafe on the exit to Miles City; the station is Husky, the cafe has some of the best french fries I've ever tasted. If you're going through Miles City stop off there. But if you can help it, don't go to Miles City!) So the next step of the plan was to detour through Billings, which contained an International garage. That route lost us 65 miles or almost two hours; but we finally decided it was worth it. And at 10.30 pm. we pulled into the garage (open till midnight); and in a little over half an hour had a bolt moved from one place to another, and the oil started circulating in the engine as it previously hadn't been doing, and our speed and power went up, and we choogled on into Helena (with an hour-long stopover in Townsend, waiting for a gas station to open); and the milage improved from 6 miles per gallon to 9. And at Helena we pulled into the Holiday Inn, and I started writing a letter home, and we crashed. Totally.

We started to find out more about the trip, the job, the intentions:

1. We're playing for three hours. The contract had said three, but Tim Kehr had told us two; we thought perhaps we were sandwiching the First Edition in between our first and second sets, so that we were actually starting at 9.30 and ending at 12.30, but not playing the whole time.
2. The First Edition were palying in the high school gym, they said. We're playing in the ballroom/party room thing underneath the college dining hall; the First Edition are the concert, we're the dance. (Carroll College, did I tell you? Homecoming.)
3. Lunch at noon, all you can eat, you're in free at lunch. And dinner tonight, too.

So I got awakened at 11.30 after maybe an hour's sleep to head for lunch. Steve and Jim left lunch just before some cute girls came over to sit with Frenchy, Dianne and me; Steve and Jim were the ones who were girl-hunting! Despite drowsiness I managed to retain enough of my conversational facilities to persuade said female trio to be at the dance tonight;

but I must not have done it too well, because I didn't see them.

And I crashed again; and got awakened in time for the very tail end of a steak dinner; and the equipemtn was set-up downstairs (I'd helped set it up myself, so nearly unconscious I didn't really know what I was doing). We'd gone over "Home Again" and "My Days are Numbered" (Bolld, Sweat and Tears off the first album, with me on piano) and "Floating" by me, with Jim singing lead as he'd never previously done. (I'd been singing it but I'm a weak voice and the song wasn't written fir imitation Dylan/Donovan types anyway and Jim sang it better, it was more nearly within his range.) So then after dinner the four of us on instruments jammed for a while and then got dressed for stage and went over to Helena Senior High to watch the First Edition.

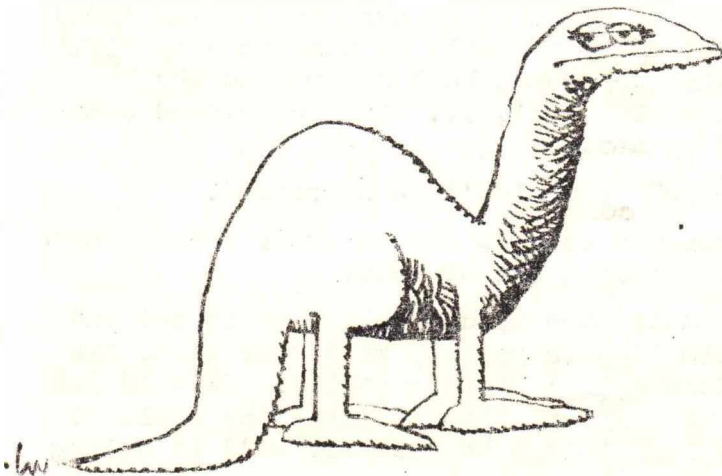
And there wasn't really very much to catch.

We used to play "But You Know I Love You" back when Ken was in the band; five part vocal with Ken doing harm parts on the organ and I threw in a lot on guitar. The First Edition were introduced, and as the introductions were finished, they began to sing: "When the morning sun/sweeps across my room..." with rythm guitar, bass and drums doing nothing in particular, and the too-loud lead guitar getting in the way and the harmony not being really forceful. At the end - do you remember the single? - it stopped: "Wooosh, I love you!" But instead of the clean unannounced "But You Know I -" without instruments, all the voices coming in together, the way the Circus and the single had it, an obtrusive drum thing started to hold it together and the voices still weren't that impressive. (They used three on that song.)

Lead guitarist doing stage routines reminded me of a bad cross between the Smothers Brothers and Harlan Ellison, with just a touch of Lou Fallert. The most Ellisesque thing about him was that he laughed too hard at his own jokes; I would have laughed much harder if he hadn't.

Their material was unquestionably good; they must do wellin clubs. For that matter I'm sure their albums are good; the singles were well enough done by comparison with the concert that I can believe that the other

songs sounded good. We're planning on learning some of those songs, in fact, after we get more of our own worked out. Among the First Edition's problems was the fact that they learned dancing-type material; and then they didn't fill up the sound properly to make it genuinely dancable. We, as a strangely dance-type group could do a more internally consistent job on the same songs, and quite possibly have a blast doing it.



And also on the brighter side was "Sunshine", the flip side of "Reuben James", their last single. Kenny Rogers left his bass and picked up a classical guitar and sat down in front of a mike for the guitar and the lead guitarist went to bass (horray! Adequate bassmanship and those irritating guitar notes gone) and the drummer played with his hands on the edged of the drums. It was a song-for acoustic-guitar without really being at all folky and it also served to convince us that we could do likewise on stage. (We'd been thinking about it, for a concert-type situation; one possibility was "Helplessly Hoping" by Crosby, Stills and Nash, but there were other things and songs I'd written. It would be right and proper to do such a thing on a concert stage and the First Edition proved that it could be done well. I was glad for them.)

And possibly the best all-round performance I heard them do was "Reuben James" and the best piece of material "I Think I just Found My Mind" (sung by the rythm guitarist, Ken somebody-else, who is also a solo recording artist for Universal records). "Sunshine", I suppose placed second in both categories; and we had to leave during intermission to get really ready, but then it turned out it didn't matter because people didn't start arriving and we didn't start playing until ten.

Us. Playing. Finally!

The waiting was partly filled with hassles. Dianne had skipped dinner and had somehow got too hungry to sing; and everybody was trying to figure out ways around that (going out and ordering A&W hamburgers, f'rinstance and I don't really remember why that didn't work)... when Dianne herself made an appearance I don't know who was hassling what, but she was game and ready to sing. I was glad; and our first song was 3/5 of a Mile in 10seconds by the Jefferson Airplane, and our second was the world premiere of "Home Again."

People came up and requested songs, sometimes. And sometimes people came up to tell us we were good. We played a set, bam-bam-bam! zero time between songs but the written out set order had been fouled up by the late start. First set, okay. But I had to borrow from the other sets to do it right (calling the shots, that is) because all the songs worth leaving out were in the first set, you see... And then during the break someone asked me if I was from Minneapolis (yes-three mikes or so away from being true) and were the Canoise still together? (No - a couple of members were still together in a band called Zarathustra who won a Paul Revere and the Raiders prize type of thing on 'Happening '68'.)... Then we played some more and all of a sudden we looked up and...

and the place was packed. 800 people? I wouldn't be surprised.

The really nice thing was the people who came up for no other reason than to tell us we were great. And there were a lot of them.

Mickey Jones, 'First Edition's' drummer came up during the third set and requested 'Floating'. We played him that (a repeat, we'd done it before he showed up) and then repeated 'Home Again' (better still). He told Arf before he left that he thought we were great, that he liked the style of our material and if we did all original things he was sure we'd go a long way.

And I almost can't get over that.

We all wanted to meet the First Edition but it couldn't be arranged; they were heading for a party and we had to get rested up for the next morning. When we tried to find out where the party was, we didn't get results; and I'd say it's just as well.

There's not really much to add. We ended; the lights went on; someone in the crowd yelled "One more!" but the departure was speedy and orderly, and it would not have been right if we'd interfered with it.

Pretend the story's over or something. Steve woke me up against my wishes at 9.45; Frenchy had said to be up early and had given 9.30 as a guess of a figure. It turned out that Frenchy was up at 7, working on the bus's radiator hose and didn't intend to wake us up until he was good and ready, about 11.30. Today, Wednesday, I'm still not thoroughly rested and that particular hour-and-forty-five Steve robbed me of may be responsible. On the other hand, the trip back didn't help much.

We took highway 12 and saved on distance; it developed, astonishingly I guess, that the road was just as good as highway 94 despite its only-tow-laneness. Truck stops were few and far between; Bowman, N.D. had one at a time when we were nearly out. And then Mobridge, S.D.; Frenchy said the bridges going into town were really impressive but I was asleep at the time. I wasn't asleep much of the time but I missed the entry into Mobridge and so did everybody else.

The happy aftermath was pulling into Dianne's around 6 on Monday. Dianne's mother was saying into the phone, "Hold on a second, I think they're pulling in now." And then Frenchy came in and they gave him the phone, Dianne and her mother and Steve and I standing around looking expectant and Frenchy raps for a little bit and begins to look happier and transfigured.

"Who was it?" someone then asks.

"It was Tim Kehr," Frenchy replied. "They just called him from Carroll College. They loved us. And Marsh said to tell him all our open dates--all of them - he'll fill them. We don't even have to audition."

Jim went out to his car whose window was broken (insured), and Frenchy drove me home in the bus. And I was back home and Morton greeted me with purr, etc. Life was back to normal. Maybe someday I will be, too; and then I'll tell you how I did it and we cal all be happy.

— Nate Bucklin

the
Comorg
DINKUM
CITY
Contest



It is said that the great Cities of the world tend to have their own special character; New York has its Central Park, Tokyo its famous Bay, Paris the Eiffel Tower, Sydney the Harbour Bridge, Melbourne.... well, let's not concentrate on landmarks. What about the people?

The dinkum aussie is a shy bloke at heart and his innate modesty (at least) prevents him from skiting about the quality of the pioneer urban society in which he lives and moves and has his being.

With the emergence of Australia into international fandom, this situation is not putupable with, and, inspired by Carey Hanfield's ANZAPOPLL, COMORG is running a Competition to decide which of our Cities reflects the true Australian Way of Life in its purest form.

Here is how it works:

Capital Cities of the Australian States are listed below in random order.

Beside the name of each City is a figure representing the STARTING POINTS FOR competitors who live in or closest to the City concerend (Overseas fans are entitled to adopt a City for the purposes of the Competition).

In the next three columns are lists of Characteristics not necessarily related to the Cities whose names are on the same line.

Hobart	7	Rustic	Folksy	Provincial
Adelaide	5	Artistic	Cultured	Religious
Melbourne	1	Competitive	Commercial	Respectable
Brisbane	3	Carefree	Outdoor	Ageing
Perth	7	Casual	Adventurous	Hard-Drinking
Sydney	1	Brash	Cosmopolitan	Materialistic
Darwin	10	Selfish	Reactionary	Drunk
Canberra	9	Elitist	Sneaky	Political

HOW TO ENTER THE COMPETITION

To enter the COMORG DINKUM CITY COMPETITION simply complete the enclosed OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM according to the following directions and send it to the address on the form.

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

1. Enter your STARTING POINTS. Note carefully that these depend on where you live or the City you have adopted, not the City for which points are being calculated.
2. Opposite the name of each City, enter the three Characteristics (taken from those listed above) which, in your opinion, most typify its inhabitants. Note that Characteristics in each Column are not

used up - they can be allotted as often as you like.

3. Score each city as follows: Allot points in each column by counting the number of lines (up or down the Table on the previous page) from the City to the Characteristic you have chosen.

Multiply this number by the STARTING POINTS.

Enter the result in the space provided only if you want to give the city concerned some points (It is permissible to leave Cities out of your entry).

Enter Totals, first across for each City, and then down for each Column (If your additions are correct, the City and Column totals should cross balance).

4. Sign your ENTRY FORM and Enter your Name and address.
5. Complete the Slogan on the ENTRY FORM.
6. Affix a Palmolive Soap wrapper to the ENTRY FORM (or a reasonable facsimile thereof signed by the Governor of the Reserve Bank and the Secretary of the Treasury).
7. Write on an Envelope the address on the face of the ENTRY FORM. Insert ENTRY FORM into Envelope, Affix Stamp and put Envelope into the Letter Box.

((Now read all that again, just to make sure that you've got it.))

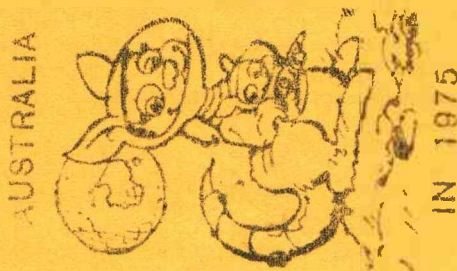
THE WINNING CITY will be the one which scores total points closest to the average for all Cities from all the enteries combined.

PRIZES: Provided the above Directions are faithfully observed, you become eligible for the Draw from one of the following exciting PRIZES:

1st Prize .. A Pome by Bill Wright.

2nd Prize .. One bottle of Purple Para Plonk from the cellars of Dicky Riordan's Pub (empty).

3rd Prize ..



A rubber stamp which produces this cute little design.

(Have fun!

Stamp everything in sight!)

JUDGING will be on the basis of the Neatest Correct Entries drawn from a hat.

ELIGIBILITY: The COMORG DINKUM CITY CONTEST is open to anybody who can get hold of an ENTRY FORM. Members of COMORG, their families and familiars, are precluded from agstaining from this Competition.

THE COMORG DINKUM CITY CONTEST

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

To: The ORGANISER
COMORG DINKUM CITY CONTEST
c/ PO Box 74
Balaclava 3183
AUSTRALIA

I wish to enter the COMORG DINKUM CITY CONTEST and understand that it is mandatory to complete the slogan on the Entry Form.

I agree to abide by all the rules of the Contest as described in RATAPLAN 7. (Note carefully that agreement to all the rules of COMORG is not required.)

I score the Capital Cities of the States of Australia as follows:

My STARTING POINTS are

CITY	Characteristic	Pts	Characteristic	Pts	Characteristic	Pts	Total
Hobart							
Adelaide							
Melbourne							
Brisbane							
Perth							
Sydney							
Darwin							
Canberra							
Total							

Complete the following:

"I support AUSTRALIA IN SEVENTY-FIVE because.....
.....
....."

Affix a Palmolive Soap wrapper here (or a reasonable facsimile thereof signed by the Governor of the Reserve Bank and the Secretary of the Treasury).

(Signed)

Name:

Address:

.....



PRINTED MATTER

Peter Roberts
c/- The Hawthorns
Keele
Staffs
England