



# Sikander

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edited and published by

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AUSTRALIA

and is available for such things as \$1.00, a letter of comments, written or drawn contributions, and your fanzine in trade. It is also available for editorial whim, but that is not very reliable. Oh yes, another way you can get this here fanzine, is by sending me some old fannish fanzines. (Strangly enough, the two people who gave me old fanzines in response to the last issue were John D Berry and John Berry. Cy Chauvin also gave me some old fanzines, but that was before he had recieved his copy of Sikander 1, and so he didn't know he ensuring that he would have fun-filled reading pleasure with future issue of this fanziqe. And besides, Cy would probably die from being mentioned in the company of the two Johas.) :: Registered for posting as a publication - Category B.

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artists.

=====  
Electrostencils by Noel Kerr

Thanks go to John Foyster for showing me  
the ins and outs of using electrostencils.

=====  
We Also Heard From (Cont. from p28).

Richard Faulder (twice!); Michael Newbery;  
Lee Harding, "and DO nail Bangsund down a  
as a Regular Columnist, please..."; Grant  
Stone; Harry Andruschak; Leanne Frahm;  
David Grigg; and three John B's, they  
being 'rosnan, 'erry, and 'angsund.

=====



important that I put down the right name. That is to say that I was about to enter the big, wide world out there: it was soon that I was to leave school and enter college; it was soon that I would be of the age when I could get my drivers license, and we all know that the drivers license is the number one form of identification; it was soon that I would be of voting age; it was soon that I would start filling in income tax forms and the like. So I asked my dad about this, and he said that as far as he knew I could use any variant of my names that I wanted to.

Good! It sure was a relief to hear that. For a start, I have five bank accounts and no three are alike. Two are in the name of Irwin Hirsh, two in the name of Braham Irwin Hirsh, and the last is in the name of Irwin Braham Hirsh, and I didn't fancy going from bank to bank just to have all the accounts in the same name. And that is just the tip of the iceberg.

(I should say here that if I had to choose between Hirsh and Herszkowicz, I would choose Hirsh. Reluctantly. Herszkowicz when pronounced correctly sounds great. And I love those long Eastern European names, and having a name with two z's in it appeals to my sense of the ridiculous. But I know from experience that Hirsh is far easier to use than Herszkowicz.)

When travelling with a name like Herszkowicz it can prove to be most educational. During the summer of 1976/7 my father and I travelled the world, visiting Iran, Israel, England, and (ever so briefly) Canada and the USA. Herszkowicz was the name in our passports, so we had to travel under that name, and of course we got some strange looks. The reaction which most gave us a clue as to the thinking of the people in those countries was when someone would attempt to give our name over the phone. In Iran and Israel the person on our side of the line would keep saying our name over and over until we told her/him that they had it right; we never, however, inquired as to whether the person on the other end of the line got it right. Yet the people in the UK, Canada, and USA would only be half way through pronouncing it before they realised it would be easier and quicker if they were to spell out our name to the other person.

Now that I think of it, it was in connection with that trip that was the first time I had ever used Herszkowicz as my name. I have very little doubt that the first time I ever wrote down the word Herszkowicz was when I filled out the application for a passport. It wasn't until about three weeks into that trip that I could spell my surname without looking it up first. My signature in my passport was written in before I left Australia and by golly it sure looks it.

(During my recent holidaying in Nth America I was able to travel under the name Irwin Hirsh. In the three years between the two trips we discovered that for a small cost I can have a note put

into my passport with the name of how I want to travel.)

It was on the night after I arrived back in Australia that I finally decided to change my name. We (my father, my mother, Mitta (my sister) and I) were downstairs watching a made-for-tv film. It was based on an Irwin Shaw novel which used Lake Placid as its setting. Or, rather, my father was watching the film; the rest of us were trying our best - via the use of smart remarks - to change the channel. But my father was in a "I payed for the tv, so we'll damn well watch what I want to watch" mood, and so we were getting nowhere. It was somewhere in our smart-remarking that the following lines were spoken:

Mitta: God, Irwin Shaw is a lousy writer.

Mother: Isn't he!

Me: ((glaring at my mother)) And I was named after him!

Mother: ((on the defensive)) He used to be good; like back in the days of Mixed Company.

Mitta: At least you could have named him after an author who lasts. Something like Vladimir.

And the more I think of it, the more I think that Vladimir Herszkowicz does have a nice ring to it.

=====  
2. GUFF STUFF.  
=====

The first GUFF race was really intended to be a one-shot. What with Seacon being the first British worldcon in 14 years, and all. But

someone has decided that GUFF is a Good Thing and as such there will be a GUFF race to bring a fan from the UK out here to attend ADVENTION '81, the 20th Australian Science Fiction Convention, which is being held over the Queen's Birthday Weekend, June 1981, in Adelaide.

This fanzine will probably arrive in the UK too late to inspire anyone to want to stand, but there will certainly be enough time for you Aussies to do something about getting someone to stand. What I'm suggesting is that if there is a British fan who you would particularly like to meet, why don't you write to them and suggest that they might want to stand. Knowing that there is someone out here who would like to meet them might just be enough to get them to seriously think about the matter.

The conditions for nomination are that the signatures of 3 nominators from the UK, and of 2 nominators from Australia, together with a bond of \$5 or £2.50, and a platform of no more than 100 words be in the hands of one of the administrators by the 25th of August, 1980. Requirements such as length of time in fandom, number of fanzines published, or whether the candidate's accent will be understood by the hosts do not form any part of the nominating conditions. The reasoning being that the fans supporting GUFF are very much able to judge who is the best

candidate.

For more information contact one of the administrators:

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22 Northumberland Avenue  
Reading, Berkshire RG2 7P!  
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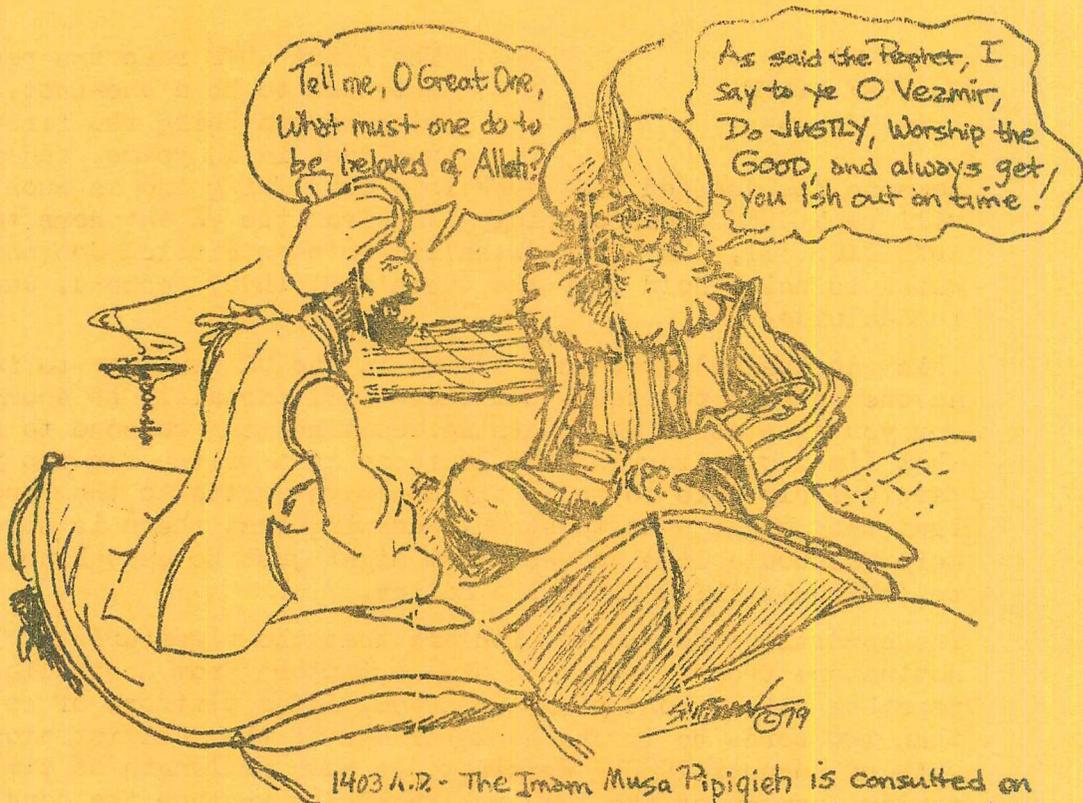
To help the money raising part of GUFF, I have decided that all funds gained from this issue will be going to it. The only problem with that being that extensive market research has revealed that this issue is unlikely to gain any funds ...

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3. TIRESOME EDITORIAL POLICY DISCUSSION.

=====

I was going to give you the reasons why this issue is late, but since that other fanzine that arrived today also tells you why it is late, I see no reason why you should read the same thing twice.



1403 h.r. - The Imam Musa Pipiqieh is consulted on a matter of great importance by Vezmir al-Chu

=====  
4. A TRIP REPORT?  
=====

Even before I left Australia back in November of last year I started having doubts about whether I would ever get around to putting out a full trip report. After-all, I was going away for three months and could quite easily have put together a report of 100 pages, and the thought of doing a couple of drafts and then publishing 100 pages devoted to one specific item (well...) does not correspond with my present plans for fan-publishing.

However, then there is the thing that I just can't ignore that three months by not putting a word of it down in print. After-all, people are interested in knowing where I went, what I did, who I met, and all that. More importantly, writing something about the trip strikes me as a very fine way of thanking and expressing my appreciation to the large number of people who helped me during those three months.

What follows is an attempt to get across some of the feeling that I got from what is trying to cram a small part of Nth America into three months of fast paced travel. I don't know how successful it will be; I feel sure that if it appeared within weeks, rather than months of my arrival back in Australia it's success would have been a bit more assured. Hopefully this will not be all that I write on the trip, as I fully intend to write a small number of articles on specific aspects of those three months. Whether they appear in the near future (say in the next six months) is most unlikely, however.

=====  
5. TRAVEL MIGHT NOT BROADEN THE MIND BUT IT DOES GIVE YOU SOMETHING ~~BOY~~ TO TALK ABOUT.  
=====

freeways was so that cars could get to where they want to go very quickly. (Melbourne freeways have notices at entrances which say "No Stopping".)

- Wondering if the "Pirates of the Caribbean" and the "Haunted House" made spending a day at Disneyland worth it.
- Don Fitch spending a lot of time driving me around L.A.. Considering the public transport system that L.A. has got, I would have done nothing in my ten days there if it wasn't for Don. I hereby award Don the Most Helpful Person Award for my 3 month trip. He certainly was streets (or, considering this is L.A., should that be freeways...) ahead of anyone else in this regard.
- Very often telling people that while I speak like an Australian - dropping off ends of words, and such - I didn't actually speak

In 97 days only so much can happen, such as:

- In L.A., actually stopping on a freeway, when my understanding of

with an Australian accent. Then, at Confusion 6 and /or 7, I ran into Adrienne Losin and discovered just how much of a 'Strine accent she had. I then starting telling people that if they wanted to hear a real Aussie accent they should go and speak to Adrienne. Not that they did, of course.

- Not quite making it to a lecture or two at UC Berkeley, which means I can't quite quote Dustin Hoffman (out of The Graduate) as part of this here trip report.
- Walking through San Francisco's Golden Gate Park towards the de Young Museum/Asia Art Gallery, and not quite believing my luck when I found that the temporary exhibition was of some of David Hockney's drawings. David Hockney just happens to be one of my favourite artists in the world.
- Decideding that Bill Brieding's West Virginian accent is just about the worst accent in the world. It certianly ranks with Jimmy Carter's Georgian accent, and your typical 'Strine accent as some of the ugliest accents your ears could hear.
- It was only after he had let me into his house that Mike Glicksohn discovered I was a fellow FAPAN. It was on the basis of that membership that I had written to Mike in the first place, place, and then phoned him from Hamilton, Ont., as I figured he probably wouldn't have recognised my name from WAHP columns otherwise.
- Rubbing my hands with glee when I bought 3 issues of ASFR for \$2.00 off Tarel and Victoria Vayne (and Linda Bushyager), as I wondered how much of a profit I would make if I was to put them into an auction at which Marc Ortlieb and Perry Middlemiss were present.
- Shopping in the world's largest store just five days before Christmas. And yet...
- On the 24th of December at 4.00pm walking from a very, very crowded Lexington Ave, to a practicaly bare Park Ave.
- On Broadway being totally knocked out by The Elephant Man; seeing the world's greatest actress - Maggie Smith - in Tom Stoppard's Night and Day; and being somewhat turn-off by Evita, mainly because there were many times when I expected the cast to burst into various songs from Jesus Christ Superstar, (Andrew Lloyd Webber must know a total of three tunes, and yet, he has somehow managed to get two succesful Broadway productions out of them.)
- Walking out of several New York stores because they insisted that I check-in my bag, which would have required me to wait in a long queue, and I wondered about who was doing whom the favour.
- Discovering what it is like to be a guest at a hotel at which a

convention is being held. When I was in New York I was with my parents and we stayed at the New York Hilton, and two days before we left a convention started. It was a convention of university people, probably something as innane as a convention of physic library librarians (Hi! Bruce Pelz). What I saw of it was madness. On the first day you couldn't move for the mass of people waiting to register; surely the New York Hilton would've worked out a system for ultra-quick registration when they host a convention! I must say that there were times when it seemed like a stiff convention; mainly when I was in the elevator. For one thing, as soon as the con started those elevators started to go very slow in the full fannish tradition. Also, the people in the elevators were always talking about the articles they have just had published. I went looking for room parties, but didn't find any.

- In Aspen, skiing like I never have before. On the morning of my last day there I felt like I was Jean-Claude Killy skiing my way to three olympic gold medals, and a fortune in endorsements. (Now if only Mt. Buller was to grow 5000 or so feet so that the snow was nice and powdery and then a delight to ski on, and if only the length of the slopes at Buller were to grow somewhat so that I wouldn't find myself spending more time in the queues for the tows to take me up the mountain than I do skiing down the mountain. Then I might find myself enjoying skking at Mt. Buller.)
- Deciding that Dos Equis is the best readily available beer in the USA (even if it is Mexican); and that the Export Posters Lager is the worst readily available beer in the USA.
- At ConFusion 6 and/or 7, when replieing to a question from Brad Parks as to what my biggest fear was, that it was that on my next flight TWA would loose my bags. At that stage it was my biggest fear in life. 9 days previously, when flying from Denver to Washington DC, because of TWA I missed a connecting flight at St. Louis. The only way of getting to DC that night was to fly down to Atlanta and then take a flight up to the Washington-Baltimore airport. Somewhere in there my bags went astray. (By the way, there is nothing as cheap as having a flight captain welcome you aboard with a Jimmy Carter accent.) Then a week later when flying from DC to Detroit TWA somehow again managed to loose my bags.
- Going to a pinball parlour with Diane Drutowski and watching her get 6 free games off one ball, and breaking the highest score on that machine to date. (Diane has since told me that she has also broken the highest score on another machine at the same place.)
- Going on the Jim Young Two Hour Walking Talking Tour of Minneapolis, but with Ken Fletcher and Linda Lounsbury and not

Jim Young as my guide. For that matter, the tour lasted a lot longer than two hours, and because it was too cold to walk we drove. I guess that's Minneapolis fandom for you.

- Arriving at Joyce Scrivner and Denny Lien's place just an hour before Sikander 1. A few days later we popped around to see M.K.Digre just minutes after his copy had been delivered. And two other people greeted me by asking how to pronounce the word 'Sikander'.
- Having a lot of American fans telling me a pack of lies about Eric Lindsay's latest trip to the USA. But by ghod they were all organised and 100% prepared when it came to telling these lies; everyone, quite independently, told me much the same thing. But I mean to say, Eric spending six months very drunk and falling into the hands of women is just too much.
- Going to see La Cage Aux Folles with Diane Drutowski and hearing the following conversation from the couple behind us:

She: What's this film about?

He: Homosexuals.

She: Oh no!

He: Don't worry, it's tastefully done.

Diane and I just looked at each other, not knowing what to say.

- The highlight of the trip being the way in which I met Moshe Feder. (Unfortunately I don't think I could do justice to this event, and so I have asked the person who 'introduced' us if he will write up an article about it. If all goes well that should appear next issue.)
- Never really being sure which city has the best public transport system, though L.A. has the worst. New York's subway system suits Manhattan island to a tee, (I never did get off Manhattan so I wouldn't know just how good or otherwise the subway is to the rest of New York). The only problem with the systems in the San Francisco/Bay and Washington DC areas are that the trains and buses are not controlled by the same organization; and because of this particular reason those 2 cities have the most expensive transport systems in America. However, if I was the Victorian Minister of Transport and was going to do something about improving Melbourne's public transport system, I would look towards the system Toronto has, as the 'groundwork' for something very similiar is already here.
- Drinking Beer brand beer with Terasa Nielson Hayden saying "Holding one of these cans makes me feel like I'm part of a Bill Rotsler cartoon".
- Spending an hour-and-a-half with a while load of Seattle fans trying desperately to get some plates from which to eat our breakfast/lunch.



ennui of the fannish and social hiatus is irrelevant. Importantly, he was forced to miss one of our most exciting (and elongated) Cricket seasons and some of the silliest antics that our leaders have ever got up to. There was really nothing fannish to be missed. I imagine that a pile of zines, apas and junk built up, but we are all used to that, during periods of long or short partial or pseudo-gaiation. But his remorse at failure to grok in fullness the nuances of the cricketing action resulted in his plea to me to commit for posterity (who I would think waits with less than baited breath for revelations) my reaction to the Cricket that he missed. Any superfluous political content is of my own interpolation and invention.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before commencing a mere overview of some of the highlights of the season, it is incumbent on me to outline some of the salient features and beauties of the gentleperson's game of Cricket. I have, on a previous occasion, drawn a somewhat strained analogy between Cricket and Grand Opera (in the context of a somewhat wider article on the similarities between sport and various art-forms). However, like Opera, Cricket is a pastime for the afficianado. It contains several nuances, traditions and forms that would cause the uninformed spectator to be confused, bemused and startled.

Basically, it involves two teams of eleven (wo)men who each have a turn at attempting to dismiss the opposing team for as few runs as possible. In this sense, there is some comparison to Baseball. However, Cricket is a sport which has incredible variation in pace and pitch: from the adrenalin-pumping excitement of a batting team scoring runs almost at will to a slow paced "battle between willow and leather" when the bowling team is on top.

The object of the game - at the top level - is to score more runs than your opponent over the space of two innings each. In each innings all eleven players can bat (and only the eleven can bat - although sometimes a captain will declare the innings closed before all have batted) and is over when ten are out, or the innings is declared. The opposing side's eleven field through this innings although replacement is allowed in the case of injury. This replacement cannot bat, bowl or keep wickets ( sort of catcher) nor can he field in a position deemed to be specialist by the opposing captain. Throughout an innings, fielding players take turns in bowling - in spells of six-balls called overs. There are usually three main forms of bowlers - fast bowlers who hurl the ball at speed; seam bowlers who are usually medium paced but achieve success by moving the ball off the seam which joins its two halves; and spinners who, usually, bowl slowly to allow the ball to spin and turn after it hits the pitch.

Each team is constructed of specialists. A model team would

consist of five batsmen, a wicket-keeper, three fast/medium bowlers, a spinner and an all-rounder (who can bat and bowl). All can be expected to field well and return the ball to the keeper, while some specialists may approach the class of all-rounder by having skills in the area in which they are not specialist.

Politics on the other hand is an absurd game played between (in Western nations) two unequal sides of amateur bunglers, with no rules (except when invented for convenience), no visible skill or any sense. In this way, it is far more variable than any other spectator sport and a hell of a lot funnier. In Australia, Tweedledum calls himself the Liberal-Country Party Coalition and is in theory conservative, in favour of big-business, the amerikan alliance and all things good, not to mention the gradual cut-back of government involvement in such unnecessary areas as health, education and welfare. Tweedledumber is called the Australian Labor Party (no-one can explain the odd, to Australians, spelling) and is generally in favour of the welfare state, high government spending, a neutral international stance, business that isn't too big or supra-national (aka multi-national), and the trade union movement from whom it gets most of its members and money. Both sides are mainly represented by lawyers and farmers.

\* \* \* \* \*

The summer started in politics with a Minister caught doing things with his family company which might have been illegal. From there they went down hill. Politics always needs a good scandal and, fortunately, for Canberra (the National Capital - a sort of inland, surrounding a lake, sterile, all-white Washington) watchers, the polities stumbled and lurched from one ridiculousness to another.

And the cricket provided only a little relief. It was, in 1979-80, divided on two levels. The local first class competition between states, called the Sheffield Shield, with its one-day, limited over offshoot, provided the meat of the action and book-ended the international matches. These consisted of a series of one-day matches between the West Indies, a side selected from several Caribbean nations, England and Australia and also three Test Matches between Australia and the Windies and three between Australia and England. (Test matches are the pinnacle, by the way, five days, six hours a day, in which to get a result. On the other hand, Sheffield Shield is played over four days, club (weekend) cricket over one or two days and limited over (one day) cricket is a game where each side bowls 50 overs or some such at each other, and the winner is the one who gets the most runs regardless of the number of wickets lost.) It is important to understand the full ramifications of the season to realise that there had been a catastrophic split in (especially Australian) cricket for the previous two years. An entrepreneur, press baron

and media magnate by the name of Kerry Packer, somewhat miffed at the refusal of the Cricket authorities to sell broadcast rights to his media organisation, had decided to start his own band of cricketing cavaliers and had poached nearly all Australians with any claim to competence, a fair leavening of English, Pakistanis and almost all the Windies. With them he had staged two seasons of "silly" cricket which had split Australian cricket up a treat, and had very little effect elsewhere because our season is arse-up. For example, our selectors wouldn't even consider Packer players for the Australian team, which resulted in a young, inexperienced and very unskilled team being walloped by the Poms, Windies and every one else who stepped onto the same ground as them.

Anyway, between seasons Packer bought the TV rights to Test Cricket and the split was healed. Thus, we anticipated a full-strength Aussie team taking on the world's best teams and holding them.

A brief aside on style. It is noted by cricket experts that each country develops its own style. English cricket is gritty, slow and possessed of a fine killer instincts. The emphasis is on technical correctness - several cricketers are made from unpromising material. The Windies are cricket's cavaliers. A swashbuckling approach that places emphasis on natural style, express bowling, extremely lithe fielding and a "devil-may-care" attitude. Australia falls in between with occasional forays into the English style but a repeated returning to a less disciplined approach. Exciting stroke-makers and quick bowlers are often there but are subject to a high failure rate, especially on English pitches that do not suit our style of play. English bowlers tend to be seamers since their damper pitches reward such bowling and off-spinning (turning the ball into right handed batsmen at a fairly quick pace) while Aussie spinners when allowed to develop tend towards leg-spinners (spinning it away from a right-hander at a much slower speed). This is, of course, a series of gross exaggerations. Two further things need to be noted - both the Windies and the Poms have been concentrating in an area which has always been Australia's speciality - fielding. The restriction of scoring by good fielding and "out-cricket" is very important, especially in one-day cricket. Additionally, one-day cricket is an underdeveloped skill in Australia - due to our failure to play it much. Also, the English captain, Mike Brearley, has an attitude very typical of Pom players - he hates to lose. He may not always be trying to win, his main aim is always to prevent a loss.

The Sheffield Shield season worked its way through a series of form reversals right down to the last match in which Victoria and South Australia featured. In the result, Victoria scrapped home by an odd-bonus point, although NSW should have won. They threw it away twice. Firstly against SA they needed 38 runs off about 3

overs - a reasonably easy task - with 5 wickets in hand and lost. Then they had Victoria on wood with an over to go, the last batsman in and still 6 runs required - and lost because they bowled a spinner instead of a quickie. To continue this whinge, NSW were also robbed of the one-day series by an absurd decision to play the match in Melbourne instead of the scheduled venue - Sydney. In the result Victoria won because NSW had to bat first on an under-prepared pitch and lost because they couldn't establish a proper run rate until the second-half of the innings. Victoria did their best to immolate but even still couldn't overcome the climatic advantages and went on to win. Equally, if the Vics had batted first they would have lost.

But enough of this picayune stuff, you say, what happened in the big time? Well there were two things going on and sure enough results were, predictably, unpredictable. In the one-day games we stousched the Windies 3 to 1 yet they won two tests with the other a tame draw when the Aussies staged a second innings recovery to present the Windies with a target in their second innings for which there was insufficient time to get. On the other hand, the Poms beat us 4 to nil in one-days yet we thrashed them three-blot in the tests.

In their one-days, the poms were beaten by the Windies 2-1, with one indecisive, and again thrashed in the final series which the Windies won 3-1 (in the best of five).

The season was highlighted by the inability of the Aussies and Poms to establish a reasonable standard of batting in the tests and the Windies to be similarly brittle in the one-days. Pure speed bowling was the main reason for this brittleness as wicket after wicket favoured speed and swing not subtlety and guile. Several personalities singled themselves out. From the Aussie point of view, stroke-making batsmen, Kim Hughes, Allan Border and Greg Chappell, all had good seasons although each had a fair share of failure. Dennis Lillee and Geoff Dymock were amongst the wickets and carried the aust. bowling attack.

The poms produced three main characters - Ian Botham, an aggrssive all-rounder, whose whole-hearted approach to the game is a model for lesser lights, Geoff Boycott, a dour Yorkshireman, almost 40, whose batting has been refined to the point where any naturalness would look antithetical and who has developed as a grafter without equal and Derek Underwood, another oldie, whose medium paced "spin" bowling was so accurate and testing that few batsmen got on top of him. Of the Windies, it is hard to overlook "Smoking Joe" Viv Richards whose batting was impeded by a hip injury but still managed to wallop bowlers all over the ground in an example of natural batting that was the most exciting spectacle of the seasons. Alvin Kallicharan who is knee high to Harlan Ellison was the only other consistently successful batsman in the team

although on a couple of occasions Gordon Greenwicz clicked with devastating (to the bowlers) results. However, the major advantage of the Windies was their battery of exceptionally fine fast bowlers, Roberts, Garner, Croft and Holding, who in match after match attacked batsmen and restricted them, frightened them and humbled them.

One should I suppose mention the contributions of Brearley who gave to the Aussie crowds a target for their spleen, himself, and Ian Chappell who raised the art of gamesmanship and "sledging" to a fine art. Brearley is a self-made cricketer, picked as English captain not for his skill as a player but for his leadership on the field and gentlemanly conduct off the field. He is very establishment which is the image that the Poms like their captain to display. Ian Chappell is one of the older Australian players, a Packer man and former captain. He is the older brother of current captain, Greg Chappell. He, through the season, garnered a fair amount of space as a result of his aggressive captaincy of South Australia and his antics on and off the field. His use of "sledging", psychological warfare aimed at upsetting opposing players, also upset the mandarins who control the game and those who write cricket columns. He was reprimanded once, reported twice by umpires, threatened with suspension, suggested as a subject of a black-ban by the English and voted cricketer-of-the-year in Sheffield Shield on a vote that is carried out by the umpires.

Somewhat later, after they left Australia for home, the Poms thrashed India in a Test with Botham getting six wickets in each innings and a hundred runs in the English innings. The Australians had a short tour of Pakistan and were beaten by the wickets which were made to neutralise Lillee and Dymock and to help the Paki spinners. Border, particularly, had a fine tour.

Of course while all this was going on there was other entertainment. Khomeini's troupe of performing fanatics seized the US Embassy and Australian leaders showed commendable restraint in their fulminations. Naturally, we supported our American ally but not with anything that involved loss of money.

The Russians stumbled into Afghanistan and we decided that we should be outraged - stopping academic and cultural exchanges, forbidding tour ships entry (once the cruise season was over) and boycotting the Olympics. At one stage we were going to stop Rutile exports (they make Titanium from it you know) but, eventually, it was decided that it would be too expensive. Also, we are opposing the invasion by sending them our wool and wheat. We have, through Prime Minister Fraser and Foreign Minister Peacock, screamed at the Russians a lot. That'll teach 'em.

We had a minor scandal when the Libs got caught handing out a

doctored ALP campaign document that had been stolen anyway; the Winter Olympics which impressed all except those forced to listen to Dick Button and other hopeless (US) announcers; and round after round of the continuing farce of unemployment and inflation show in which government spokesmen and opposition leaders sprout statistics at each other to demonstrate, respectively, that it is getting better and, anyway, it's all Labor's fault from when they were in office in 1972-5 and that it is getting worse and the government is using selective figures and bullshit to cover it up.

\* \* \* \* \*

All in all, it was an interesting summer of sport, with the cricketers being, marginally, more involving than the politicians. It was a summer which saw the elevation of sport, in real terms - cricket, Olympics, Winter Olympics - to the front pages and the relegation of the other sport, politics to a very minor place except for the occasion gaffe or act of buffoonery.

(This was written on a dull afternoon 5.5.1980, from memory, for Irwin's elucidation. Errors of fact and opinion are to be expected. But generally the tone and style of the essay demonstrate how it was November - February 1979-80. Now we are in the football season down-under and brute force and ignorance has taken the place of style and skill. So it goes. There are but 5 months to the next cricket season and in the meantime an Aussie team is touring England. Peace.)

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\*  
\* HOW I LEARNT TO SPELL "QWERTYUIOP" IN LESS THAN 5000 LESSONS \*  
\*  
\* David Grigg \*  
\*  
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I don't remember when I first realised that such things as typewriters existed, but it must have been at a very tender age. In any case, it was clear from my very earliest school years that I was destined to one day own a typewriter.

I was quite a keen student, I recall. When my parents dragged me down to the Drighlington Junior School in Yorkshire, England, once I had reached the age of 5, I apparently made a lot less fuss than expected, though I seem to remember a few bitter tears on my part over not being allowed to use the sandpit. I had already just about learned to read, because my parents had made a practice of reading to me from books. Doing sums was not too difficult, and sometimes was even interesting. Consequently my early school reports were full of praise and good marks - except for one area.

Whereas the reports would read something like this: "READING - excellent; ARITHMETIC -- very good; DRAWING - shows promise;

CONDUCT - quiet and disciplined", down near the bottom was always a line that I would dread.

It said: "WRITING - Terrible! David needs to practice constantly. His handwriting is nearly illegible!"

Such comments dogged me throughout my school career. I suppose changing schools three times during my childhood did not help, since they all taught a different form of handwriting, but that is a fairly thin excuse. And in those days - the late 1950's - schools seemed to place a strong emphasis on neatness. Today, I suspect, it's no longer quite as important. But try as I might to imitate the delicate copperplate script of the teacher, what I always ended up with was a blotty scrawl.

This was a pity, because I had already found that I enjoyed making up stories and writing them down. Now, I could read these early fictional efforts, but only rarely would a teacher fight his or her way through my scribblings and find I had written something worthwhile. The comments on my school reports changed to something like: "ENGLISH EXPRESSION - David has a vivid imagination, but he needs to improve his handwriting substantially."

Well, there wasn't much I could do about my writing. No matter how I practiced, no matter how many times I was set lines to copy - "Write out 200 lines, Grigg, 'I must learn to write legibly'" - as my hand got more and more tired my writing would deteriorate to the stage where even I couldn't read it.

But when I was about 9, something miraculous occurred. We were not very well-off as a family. My father worked as a telephone linesman, and my mother usually had some kind of job in a factory or a shop. But then she had a job for a while cleaning offices after hours. And from time to time she would take me along with her, for lack of someone else to look after me.

Initially, this was rather boring, because I had to sit around and wait for her to finish. But one such night, idling around, I discovered something under a table in the office, with a cover over it. I remember crouching down in the dark and lifting the cover out of curiosity.

It was a typewriter.

It didn't take me long to find out that I could push down the keys with letters on them and that they would then make little levers come up and strike the round rubber roller, leaving a barely legible mark on the rubber. This was quite fun, but I couldn't see the point of it.

Nevertheless, the next time my mother took me along to the office, I hunted for the strange machine again. It was in the same place, but this time there was a scrap of paper left in it. I suddenly found that I could use the keys to form words. Or rather, only

one word at a time. All the letters were easy to find, but hunt as I might, I couldn't find a key which said 'space'. The idea of hitting the long unmarked bar at the bottom of the keyboard never occurred to me. I'm pretty sure I also never managed to discover how to produce capital letters.

But the discovery struck me with the force of a revelation. There were machines which could write for you, much more neatly than I would ever be able to. From then on, it was only a matter of finding out how to acquire such a thing.

I must have pestered my parents continually for a number of years. But they were puzzled by what exactly it was that I wanted. And for that matter, I was probably still confused myself as to the exact definition of what I had found.

One birthday, my parents gave me a 'John Bull' Printing Outfit, which consisted of a small collection of rubber type which could be set using tiny tweezers onto a plastic form. This was then pressed against an ink pad and the image then transferred to paper.

This was all very interesting; but taking half an hour to set ten words which were usually full of mistakes because of the need to set them in mirror-reversed fashion was not quite what I wanted. And after a month or so, I said so. Parents are not grateful when told that they've bought the wrong thing.

But, to give them credit, they persisted. They encouraged my scholastic efforts in writing stories and small essays, but were unhappy about my rotten handwriting. Besides, once I had an idea in my head about something I wanted, I rarely let up pestering.

The next birthday they came very close to the mark. They bought me a toy typewriter.

This ingenious device I found a great delight. I even used it to compose some very short stories. But it was of very simple construction. The keyboard was painted onto tin: tap as you might at the painted keys, nothing happened. What you had to do, once you had rolled some paper into its six-inch carriage, was to turn a big wheel which sat near to the paper, so that the letter you wanted was aligned next to a red arrow. Then you pressed down a big blue lever in front of the wheel. The wheel then tilted and marked the paper with the letter you were after. Capitals only.

I was pleased with this toy for quite some time. But it was still a very slow way of getting words onto paper, and eventually the inking mechanism of the machine - which today I can't recall - started to become faint, and no replacements were available.

My next birthday was my 12th. I had finally sharpened up my ideas of what I wanted, and so had my parents. Fortunately, we had a relative, my Great-Aunt, who worked in an office which was closing

down, due to bankruptcy. They were selling off all their old equipment in an attempt to pay their debtors. And so my parents, realising their opportunity, arranged to buy one of the old typewriters. They paid, I think, \$4 for it.

It was an Olivetti Lexicon 80, and it was the best birthday present I had ever received. I remember it being unveiled on the lounge-room dining table, and sitting low in a chair with my arms very high, trying out the machine. Using two fingers, of course. I soon found out how the space bar worked, how to change the ribbon colour from black to red, and even how to get capital letters only when I wanted them.

This was the real thing. I immediately embarked on my first science fiction novel, an endless epic called Atlantia, about a planet populated by people who had escaped to another solar system from the sinking continent of Atlantis. I still have that novel. It's awful.

If you are really interested, it begins like this:

"Atlantia is a planet in another galaxy, 100,000,000,000 light-years away from ours. It lies in a solar system warmed by 3 suns; 1 red, 1 orange and 1 yellow. This solar system contains 15 planets, all those explored being inhabited..." That first sentence was typed very carefully; as I became more excited with the plot, the typing became rapidly less accurate. And I would have benefited if someone had filed the exclamation mark off the machine.

But no matter how bad my early typing, it was incomparably easier to read than my terrible handwriting. It was also rather faster, even using only two fingers, than my slow, careful, but wasted attempts at neat script. There was only one problem, however. No matter how well I typed my fantastic stories at home, there was no way I could take the bulky old typewriter to school, even if the teachers would have allowed it. At school I had to continue scrawling, a contrast that became more and more annoying as time went by.

A year passed. My parents decided to move to Australia. All of our worldly goods were packed into crates and despatched. After a long and fairly boring journey by sea, we arrived. Need I tell you what was the first item I wanted to check once the crates were opened? The venerable Olivetti survived the journey almost unscathed, though somewhere en route one of the 'SHEET' keys had dropped off.

I continued to write stories at home. My typing speed improved considerably. Eventually, I could do about twenty-five words a minute, using the increasingly calloused two fingers. But I started to realise that I wasn't going to be able to get much faster or more accurate that way. The girls at school who took typing lessons seemed to use all of their fingers. It was time, I

decided, to learn how to touch-type. I bought, borrowed or stole a typing manual, and set to work.

Initially, it was very boring, typing unexciting lines like: "frf juj frf juj frf juj", but as I progressed I learned which fingers were supposed to control which letters. The problem was that trying to use the proper fingers slowed me down enormously from my rapid two-finger typing, and I kept lapsing back into duodigital typing whenever I had something more serious than "the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" to type. However, I realised that the only way I was going to be able to touch type was to force myself. So from then on, whenever I had anything at all to type, I would do it the slow way, using all the right fingers.

This was also pretty hard on the fingers. The Olivetti was an ancient machine with an incredibly heavy touch, which became heavier as it grew older. Using my feeble little fingers to type 'a' or ';' nearly broke them.

But fortune was at hand. Carey Handfield went to the same school as me, and we had snared our interests for some time. It was Carey who introduced me to fandom, with Carey that I published my first fanzine in Anzapa, still using the trusty old Olivetti. But one day he came to me and told me that his parents, who ran a public relations firm, were selling an old IBM electric typewriter.

An electric typewriter! The very words were magic. I had seen electric typewriters, even played with them. With an electric typewriter, you didn't need to have weight-lifter-type muscles in your fingers. Carey said his parents were selling the machine for \$100. Was I interested? Was I ever!

I don't recall how I managed to get \$100 together, since I was chronically broke at the time. But I did. I kept nervously asking Carey if he was really serious; his parents wouldn't sell it to someone else, would they?

At last I acquired the lovely thing. It used carbon ribbon, producing perfect black letters, rather than the faint smudgy type from the Olivetti. I could type 'a' and ';' without suffering agonies. It produced superb looking fanzines. I was hooked.

By now, my attempts to write science fiction were growing increasingly serious, and I was improving somewhat. In 1974, I attended a brief writers workshop, organised by Lee Harding one Eastercon, clutching a beautifully typed story over which I had sweated blood. The blood paid off: the story was judged equal winner of the short story competition, and Lee eventually agreed to buy it for an anthology he was editing.

In 1975, I attended another workshop, this time led by Ursula Le Guin. I was still using the IBM, but its age was beginning to show: it was starting to become erratic, sometimes refusing to type certain letters, and skipping spaces at random. Still, I struggled on with it, even managing to have the thing serviced once.

It was on the IBM standard that I typed the first of my two children's books for Cassells. And it was then that I made up my mind that I wanted to buy another typewriter. I'd given up publishing fanzines, concentrating on writing, but I felt that I was being slowed down too much by the idiosyncracies of the old IBM. I decided I wanted an IBM Selectric.

These machines were and are very expensive. But they have numerous advantages. They can be run at tremendous speed; the typeface can be changed very easily; there is no heavy carriage thumping backwards and forward.

The latter attribute was most attractive. The IBM standard had a massive 18 inch carriage. When you hit the powered carriage return, that carriage would smash back against the right-hand stop, frequently knocking off my coffee-cup and nearly putting it through the window, but also usually moving the whole typewriter two or three inches rightward. Towards the end of my use of this machine, I nailed a piece of wood to my desk against the right hand side of the typewriter to stop it falling off the desk.

So at last, savings and first advance from Cassells in hand ("the kid's books will pay for the Selectric!" I said to Sue), I visited the IBM offices in South Melbourne, and picked out the typewriter of my choice.

That's the typewriter I still own, the one I'm using to write this article, and a very nice machine it is, too. I've typed most of the stories I've ever sold on this machine, and they look splendid (maybe they don't read quite as well as they look, but still...).

My typing speed has now reached about 40 words a minute, enough to give me a job with the Public Service as a typist, if I was ever reduced to that. But it was funny. The first job I ever had where I was given a typewriter at work was as a journalist with the Department of Trade, and everyone on the same floor as me had their own machines. I had a rotten old Remington, but that's beside the point.

Here was I, touch-typing, proud of having convinced my employers that I was a journalist. There were all those seasoned old journos, hen-pecking with two fingers at about ten words a minute, just the same way as they had been doing for the last 30 years...

Now I work for Telecom. But my interest in speeding up and improving my typing hasn't ended there. I'm still not a very accurate typist, and every time I make a mistake -- about once every



But I can't compare with John and you my memories of 1973 because I forget what happened that year. All I can remember about 1971 is going to the hospital and having an operation, and 1972 stands out in memory because that was the year I was converted from general reporting duties to column-writing at the newspapers for which I labour unless I've been fired since I left the office this afternoon. But nothing happened in 1973, as far as I can remember, and I'm sure my Christmas was much less exciting than John's and I was slightly too old to attend football games played by my classmates, so you can see how dull it is to live in Hagerstown.

I'm sure Leigh Edmonds' contribution is much more meaningful to those who know more about Australian fandom and its personalities than I do. I enjoyed it in my ignorance but there was the constant nagging suspicion that in this line was a hilarious phrase which I couldn't comprehend because it was an in-group joke and in that paragraph was a perfect parody on something which everyone in Australia and hardly anyone in North America (except you for a while) knows about.

((I dunno about you Harry but I would never forg t being fGoH a at a worldcon. I'm not sure Christmas cards, but there was a Christmas stamp that had Santa Claus riding a surf-board.))

D. West  
48 Norman St  
Bingley  
West Yorkshire BD 16 4JT  
U.K.

Don't see many Australian fanzines over here. The postal timelag tends to turn them into historical documents and this rather weakens the urge to respond and thus the connection never gets established.

Despite only the haziest familiarity with the names of the characters I found the work of your contributors quite entertaining, particularly John Bangsund's account of the blotted period that traditionally surrounds Christmas and New Year. The Americans are always going on about how Britsih fanzines devote too much space to accounts of falling over drunk, so it's nice to see a little Commonwealth support.

Eric Lindsay's account of how your country came to be colonised seems plausible, though it does rather assume an uncommon degree of efficiency on the part of the civil servants of the day. My own theory is that no one intended to set up a colony anywhere; when the London prison population got too big somebody had the bright idea of transferring the felons to prison hulks moored off the coast of Wales but failed to give the captains proper instructions ("first right, right again, then stop when you hit something") with the result that they just kept on going, occasionally asking passers-by if they'd heard of a place called something-Wales.

Still, who cares? However it got started I'm grateful for the existence of Australia, if only for providing opposition to the Scandinavian Worldcon Bid. I know those Swedes are supposed to have all sorts of earnest and non-frivolous notions about enlightened social democracy but they've certainly got the right idea when it comes to bribing and corrupting the voters. I never managed to find an Australia in 83 party (at Seacon), but I found the Scandinavians several times, and each occasion when I'd fought my way through the crowd was rewarded with a foot-long cigar and half a pint of whiskey.

Jack R Herman  
1/67 Fletcher St  
Bondi  
NSW 2026

Eric's piece was bunkum, as is most of what he writes but at least when he is writing about history his fallacies are far more obvious and therefore the intention of the satire/irony/stirring is less disguised.

Dave Wixon  
Box 8600  
Minneapolis  
MN 55408, USA

Eric's article brought home to me some history which I had long known but not fully appreciated - that Australia only came about because America would no longer accept the dregs of British society. Now, when I consider how often Eric himself gets over here (and what he does over here), as well as the large number of other traveling Aussies who come through here - well, I'm beginning to suspect Australia of being little more than a mail drop - a place, that is, where the dregs of British society were provided with new return addresses and postmarks, before they went on to America...

There, have I insulted all of you sufficiently?

I'm glad 1973 was a good year for both you and John Bangsund. It was quite a year for us here in Minneapolis, too, of course, as the whole fannish world is aware. What a worldcon!

Greg Hills  
PO Box 9314  
Wellington  
New Zealand

Having had experience with a real genuine true-blue bureaucrat for the last 3 months, I can easily find Eric Lindsay's article on the Truth behind Australian History rather convincing.

There are some really weird goofs made. Such as the computing error which has issued hundreds of payment orders with one person's numbers on it, but another person's name and address! Or... this is stepping awfully close to Official Secrets, and we mustn't make the Public Service look bad. Never mind that it is deserved, and that everyone knows it, the reputation must be preserved!

1973... Now what was I doing in 1973? Ah, that would be the year

a certain obnoxious little twit was taking his School Certificate. What fun. I joined the chess club, and by the end of the year (if I have the right year and the right memory - neither are particularly good bets!) I had worked up from position 11 to position 10, mainly due to higher-ups dropping out... I became a Librarian, which gave me several things: direct privileged access to my favourite pastime; a place to hang out to avoid periods; and a nice white badge which gave me authority to evict people fully half my size and two forms below me...

Actually, I don't have any particularly fond memories of High School. I was a short, plump, introverted procrastinator. (About the only thing that has changed is that I have managed to lose a lot of that weight since.) I grew a beard because I couldn't be bothered shaving until the Principal ordered me to. Nowadays I grow a beard because I'm too lazy to be bothered shaving, and there's no Principal to tell me to.

Mike Glicksohn  
141 High Park Ave  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6P 2S3, CANADA

I have to admit that I know very little about the history of Australia (what the hell, while I'm being candid I may as well admit I know very little about the history of anywhere) so I found

Eric's article truly fascinating. To think that if it hadn't been for some bureaucratic bumbling, Eric and all his buddies might be my neighbours!! I'll never say another unkind word about a civil servant as long as I live!!

It has long been my contention that John Bangsund is among the finest fanwriters we've ever had, albeit one who isn't as famous as he deserves to be. This example of personal journalism is fine Bangsund, although perhaps lacking the lasting impact of his more serious writing. The style shows John off well, though, and it was indeed a most enjoyable piece to read. I do wish you'd keep badgering John for something new, however; it's been far too long since I've received a Bangsund fanzine and his last really major article was in Rataplan 19/20 which is already a couple of years old. Even if you can only talk him into a similar piece about his 1979 Christmas season I'm sure you'd earn the gratitude of all of us charter members of the Bangsund Appreciation Society Towards Awarding Recognition Deserved.

I'm not sure that 1973 was such a great year for me, although it definitely had its highlights. I won a Hugo, lost a wife, found a lover and established some patterns in my life that eventually led to many happy times but handling a disintegrating marriage and working on a worldcon didn't exactly make it one of the best of times. And the strangest thing of all is that it all seems so damn remote now; totally ancient history.

Leigh's contribution is entertaining reading but undoubtedly means

a great deal more to Australians who know the people being parodied and understand the various fannish politics involved. It's a testament to Leigh's skill as a writer, however, that even an outsider can enjoy it just as a piece of fan fiction.

Frank Denton  
14654 8th Ave SW  
Seattle  
WA 98166, USA

Edmonds' article on the secret masters planning the blitz for the worldcon bid may be right on the money. It was meant to be a comic piece but may be nearer the truth than any of us know.

Fortunately, Seattle lost the '81 bid so I won't get sucked into the maelstrom of what must be a thankless job.

Anthony Peacey  
82 Milne St.  
Bayswater  
WA 6053

Your contributors struck the same note of humour throughout - sort of thing I enjoy, mate. I have not seen a great deal of these reverend gentlemen from the East (you realise of course that we

of WA divide Australia into two halves, ours and the rest) but I have met them all, and I cannot recall having seen Eric Lindsay or John Bangsund smile. However, as I read "In The Beginning" I could see Eric's face in my mind's eye bearing a rather intense and serious expression, which made his version of Australia's earliest history the funnier. In the case of John Bangsund I recalled a rather tired, droop-lidded, but happy look, that seemed to me perfectly appropriate to the mood of his piece. Leigh Edmonds - well, although I am not officially involved in the organization of the national con in Perth, let us hope that either his Minneapolis in 73 blimp does not have the range to cross the Nullarbor, or that mere national conventions are beneath his notice.

You are quite right in your suspicion that an editor's heartsearchings on the layout of his zine are boring.

Eric Mayer  
654 Boulevard East  
Weehawken  
NJ 07087, USA

It's 8AM in New Jersey and I doubt that this letter will be the stuff of which brilliant letter columns are made. (See what I mean?) I am sitting behind my desk at the Hudson County Law

Library, occasionally sipping at my tea with lemon. The counter people in the downstairs cafeteria committed my preference for this drink to memory a week after I arrived and generally I can see them slicing at the lemons the moment I walk in. They take such pride in their work that I don't dare upset the applecart by asking for a cup of coffee. So I am sitting here, on the fifth floor, which the elevator operator automatically delivers me to, proving I have at least some free will left - enough to write to fanzines at any rate. No one has arrived yet - the law sleeps. So there is no one to peer over my shoulder and wonder why the

librarian is typing an areogram ( or a ditto master, or drawing so some sort of picture for gods sake) and no one to see Sikander and say "What the hell is that?" Though they might not say it of Sikander, since it is not illustrated and probably resembles a relatively innocuous radical newsletter of some sort. I congratulate you on resisting the impulse to spend \$50 for a cover for your first issue. Apparently you have what it takes to put out a fanzine which will be frequent enough for me to remember something about it from one issue to the next. ((I'd like to think so, but so far it hasn't worked out that way...))

This is an excellent fanzine. I have not recieved many zines lately that contained three articles of this quality. Eric Lindsay's piece is finely wrought, filled with eminently humourous and re-readable lines. As for Leigh Edmonds - judging from what I've been reading by him lately, he may well be one of fandom's premier writers. Then there is John Bangsund. John says he still enjoys being a fan, but it seems to me that I was getting involved in fandom just about the time John was cutting back. At the time he was that marvellous Australian writer - the guy who wrote so much better than any Americans (sort of the Langford/Shaw of the beginning of the decade) but who, alas wasn't writing so much anymore. This fine article is the longest I've ever read by him and I thank you for reprinting it. Funny thing, I was not certain, till the very end, that it was an old article. Fandom doesn't change all that much does it?

Now allow me a gripe. The lack of comment hooks is fine. Because comment hooks are in the eye of the beholder. (ouch.) But a first issue of a genzine, even by someone who's been active in other forums, ought to have a bit more autobiography so we know with whom we are conversing. There are tantalizing hints here. Where, for example is South Yarra? What do you see out the windows there? What are you doing with yourself aside from editing a fanzine? Perhaps this is just my faanish voyeurism coming to the fore. You seem to be, this issue, of the Terry Hughes school. Excellent material, and good solid writing by yourself, but so little of it and so unrevealing. Like Terry you talk about yourself pretty much in relation to your publishing or fanning generally. (No, I see I'm exagerrating, but the info you give isn't attached to a base.) What in the name of god am I saying anyhow? Look, its 8.30 in New Jersey. I'm sorry. This loc has turned out pretty much as I feared. I think I am in need of a cup of coffee but I suppose I shall settle for tea with lemon.

((I've already answered Eric's questions by letter, but one thing I have noticed about this long delay between issues is that my aims for this fanzine have changed somewhat, and you are more likely to see some more personal stuff in future issues. The WAHP's appear on the contents page, and see ya' next issue.))



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