

NO 11

# THIRSTY BOOTS

THIRSTY BOOTS Eleven is published for ANZAPA by John D. Berry, 302 Malden Avenue East, Seattle, Washington 98112, USA. This issue is dated February 8, 1981, and is intended--quixotically --for the February, 1981, mailing of ANZAPA.

This quick two-page fanzine is but a suggestion of the wonderful, articulate, many-paged journal that of course I have always been intending to contribute to this mailing. The reasons for my not writing much this winter are many, all of them good, and I have no intention of recounting them here. In this mailing you ought to find THIRSTY BOOTS #10 as well, four pages that I wrote on stencil right after the national election in the United States last November; while it may not be responsive in any way to anything in ANZAPA, I thought it would be fair repayment for the frequent perspectives I gain on Australian politics and events in these pages. What I'm writing now is going to be just a quick sketch of all the subjects I meant to write about at greater length. (This is sounding so apologetic that perhaps I should call it "Apologia Pro Fanzine Sua.")

Those of you in Melbourne may or may not know that your city has sold four of its antique streetcars to the city of Seattle for use on our waterfront. I think the trams bought may be of older vintage than the drafty wooden ones I rode in 1975, but the type is much the same. Seattle hasn't had any streetcars in several decades (though like most American cities it once relied on them for its public transit); we do have an excellent bus system, including an extensive network of electric buses (trackless trolleys) which is even being renovated and extended, but the only transport we have on tracks is the pitiful remnants of the railroad, and the monorail. (The monorail is left over from the Seattle World's Fair of 1962. It goes from downtown to the Seattle Center, site of the fair, which is a trip of about a minute and a half; the monorail's function is purely tourist. Every once in a while someone proposes extending it to the airport to make it useful, but that would be hideously expensive and rather silly.) The railroad's legacy includes a lot of little-used trackage, though, and the proposal for the Melbourne streetcars is to run them along one of the unused tracks that runs down the length of the waterfront. With the stairways and elevators (and extra shops) that have been developed leading down the hill from the Pike Place Market, the streetcar line would connect the Market with Pioneer Square (the original center of Seattle) and bring tourists to the rather rundown waterfront. Though I'm no friend of tourism, I like the idea of

thirsty boots--2

the streetcars; I work near the Pioneer Square end of the line, so I could ride them up toward the Market for lunch, or just for fun. If they ever get the trams on the tracks.

The City Council has just withdrawn its backing for the project, because it has run over budget and they deemed it non-essential (which of course it is). There was such an outcry, though, that waterfront property owners have banded together to create a legal structure to raise the necessary money, and George Benson (the City Council member whose baby this has always been, and who personally flew to Melbourne to buy the streetcars) has a powerful lever now for getting the Council to change its mind. Meanwhile, the streetcars, refurbished and repainted, are sitting in a downtown warehouse, waiting for something to happen.

I edit the Pioneer Square Gazette, an infrequent local free tabloid that mostly promotes the neighborhood businesses (but which I also try to make reflect community concerns and questions), and the issue I'm just getting out now will feature a story on the streetcars (which, in fact, I have to whip into final shape tonight), with a cover photo of one of the cars superimposed on a scene of the waterside railroad tracks. If I had copies already, I'd try sending them through ANZAPA.

Things Australian have a tendency to seep into my everyday consciousness in odd ways. I've found a couple of intriguing books on remainder tables recently, one Australian and one American but about Australia. I suppose I ought to wait until I've read them before writing about them, but perhaps you'll have read one or both and have something to say about them. The Australian-published book is a paperback called Applestalers, "a collection of the New Poetry in Australia including notes, statements, histories on La Mama, selected and introduced by Robert Kenny with C. Talbot." Knowing nothing whatsoever about Carlton's La Mama Theatre or the poets who congregated around it, I look forward to the book as a look at an unknown creative scene as well as a collection of potentially interesting poetry. (Is anyone in Melbourne fandom connected with this group?) The American-published book is Australia 2000!, "a look at alternative futures," by Don Fabun--who, though his name isn't familiar to me, I gather is a fan, or once was. This large, profusely illustrated book seems to be a confusing account of Australia as continent and country and where it may be or ought to be going. The style is lively and the whole book appears to be a metaphor, but it'll take my digging in and reading a sizeable chunk before I can tell whether Fabun's idea of where Australia is going makes any sense to me or seems desirable. What I can't quite figure out is why he wrote the book, and why it was published here. Is it available in Australia?

--John D. Berry