

Aussiecon 4 2010

# WOOF #35

Aussiecon 4

2–6 September 2010

Put together and sort of coordinated (I put a box labelled WOOF contributions in the Newsletter office) by Alan Stewart. (Okay, there were details in PR#2 and the Pocket Program Book as well.)

There should be a computer available to update this, but it may end up a handwritten list, and then photocopied, similar to that done by Lloyd Penney in Montreal last year. We shall see.

## Table of Contents

Cover	Phil Wlodarczyk	1
Table of Contents	Alan Stewart	1
Ytterbium Oxide	Alan Stewart	1
Report From Hoople #109.171	Roger Hill	1
Tales From the Frozen North	Dean Gahlon	2

Total	6
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# YTTERBIUM

# OXIDE

**September 2010**

**WOOF Collation #35 (Aussiecon 4)**

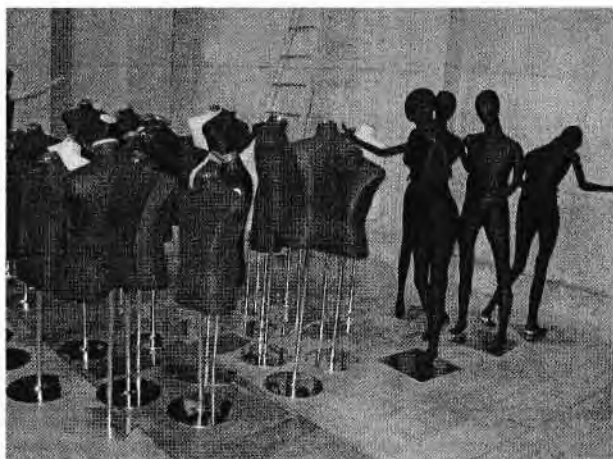
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Artwork by Bill Rotsler

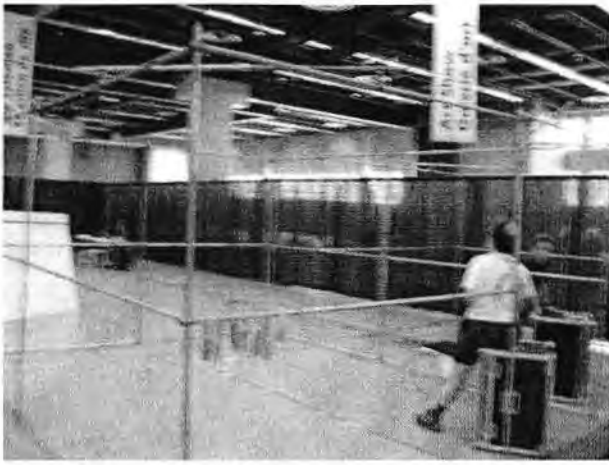
## **Brownian Noise**

As some of you will know my ANZAPA zine is called *Ytterbium*, and I'm putting together this one-off for WOOF, but trying to give some of the flavour of that zine. So there will be the regular features of that zine (see pages 3 and 4), but this first bit will be about Worldcons. So it's sort of a development or outgrowth of *Ytterbium*, hence the title *Ytterbium Oxide*.

In recent years my annual holidays have been taken to coincide with Worldcon and in 2007 I ventured to Japan armed with a new digital camera. Not that my photo taking expertise was that great. For Aussiecon 3 I managed to get a new film for my camera, but forgot about getting new batteries, so I took no photos then. Anyways, I've decided to run a few photos from my recent trips here on the first couple of pages. Probably not too many of people what with having to get permission etc these days who knows what offence might be inadvertently given and where it might end.



Nippon 2007: Display mannequins after the con.



Setting up a 'replica' of Taral Wayne's apartment in the main exhibition room.

Denver 2008: Bear statue, convention centre.

Montreal 2009



Vending machine in Congress Centre toilets.



Part of the underground walkways between the Congress Centre and other buildings.



A piece of the Berlin wall on display at a nearby hotel.



WSFS banner on display in main exhibits hall.



## METCARDS

If you use the public transport system here in Melbourne, you've probably had to buy a Metcard or two, and I've featured their various designs in issues over the years. Currently the standard blue 'message' ones seem to be popular, and I haven't seen a celebratory new design for quite a while. I've ran 12 of these so far through *Ytterbium*, and they've been around since 2005, and these messages were printed on them. I'll stick 2 of these type in below the table. These 12 are ones I've seen hundreds of.

a pre-purchased metcard means you're always ready to go. Look for outlets with the metcard flag.

a metcard is your passport to melbourne. Use it as many times as you wish on trams, trains and buses within your selected zone(s).

did you know you can use your weekly or monthly metcard all weekend - in all three zones? for greater savings and better value, a monthly metcard gives you unlimited tram, train and bus travel for an entire month within selected zones.

with over 870 metcard outlets in melbourne, why wait until you travel to buy your metcard?

if travelling on a concession fare, remember, always carry your concession card.

a pre-purchased metcard in your wallet saves time. You'll be ready to go when you need to.

buy several metcards at once to save time hunting around for coins when you travel.

why not ride to the station? Bicycles travel free on trains during weekday off-peak times, and all day on weekends and public holidays.

did you know that prams, pushers or baby carriages can be carried free at all times on melbourne's trams, trains and buses?

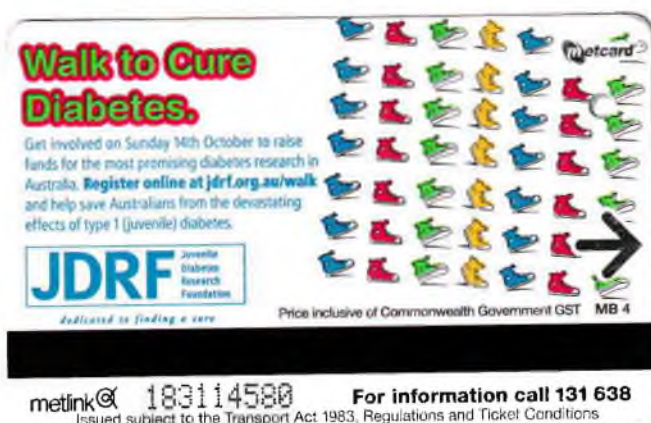
having a metcard in your wallet means it's easier to travel Melbourne's passenger transport services: just validate and go.

each time you travel on a tram, train or bus, remember to check your metcard's expiry details after validating.



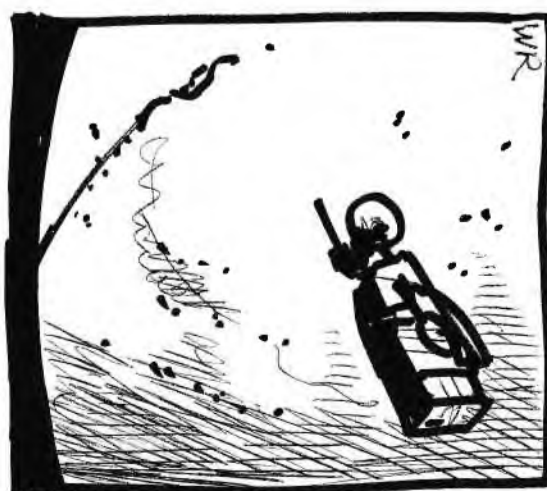
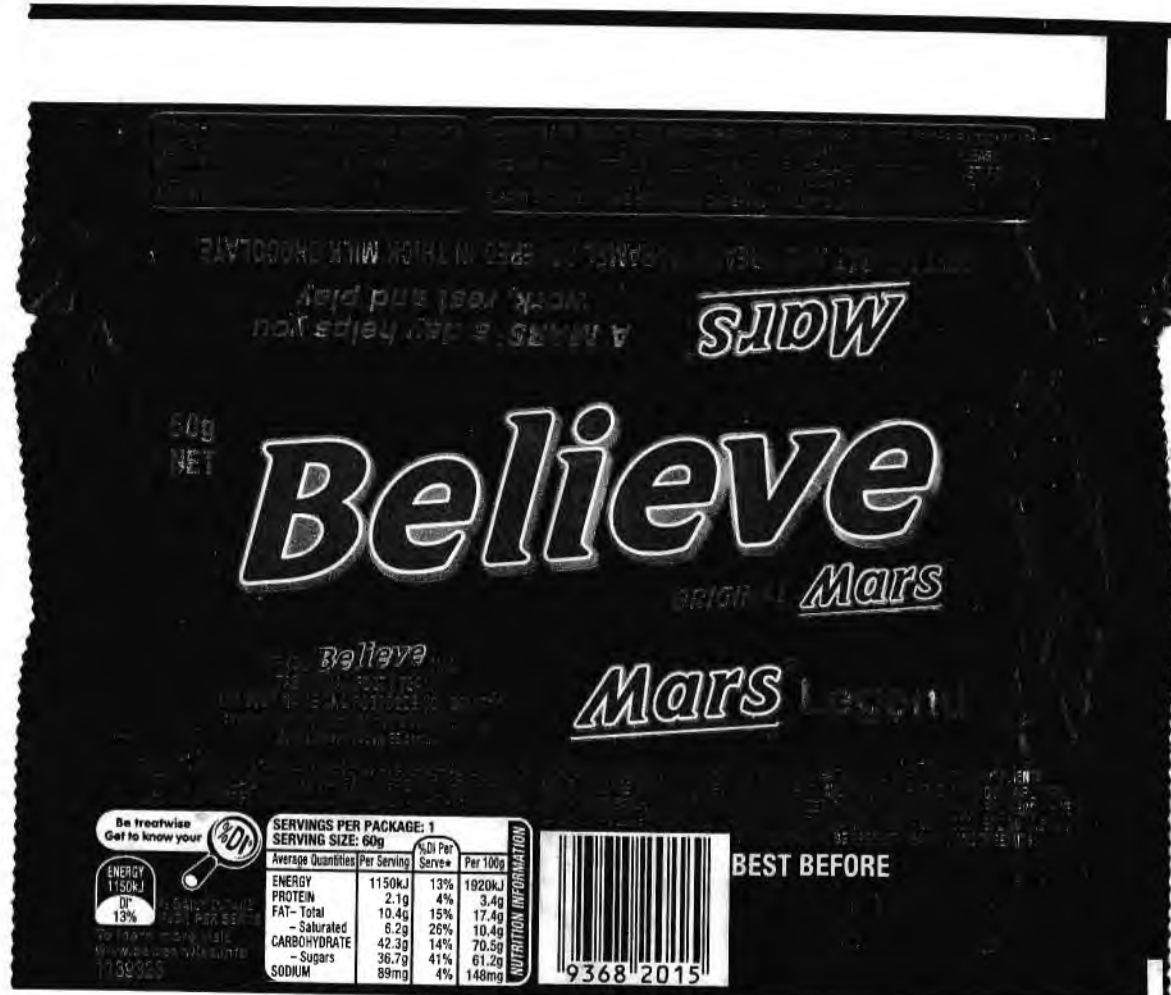
By contrast ones with the message 'ticket inspectors have authority under the transport act to ask passengers to produce a valid metcard for each journey' I've only seen a handful of and they are all dated between April-July 2005. Funny that they withdrew ones with that text. The third entry in the table above is also a bit dated as there are now only 2 zones.

Below I'll include 2 random examples of the celebratory Metcards which have been issued. It will be the luck of the draw and you may have one dealing with World Cup soccer matches, or a Melbourne landmark or even the Myer store window Christmas decorations for a particular year. Anyway, I hope you like this little bit of local colour.



## Confectionary update

This section usually features the latest unusual version of Kitkat that I have come across, but this time you'll see a "Mars" bar wrapper. Two years ago in September 2008 as you can see from the fine print, a promotion for an AFL (Australian Football League) team to be based in Tasmania took the opportunity to re-name the bar as "Believe". I don't know how successful it was, or how many people phoned in their support. Short-lived name changes are not unheard of in the AFL, one Geelong player was known as Whiskas for a while to earn advertising revenue.



Someone once said 'A zine's not a real zine without a Rotsler', and who am I to argue with that?



# REPORT FROM HOOPLER

#109.171  
FOR WOOF 2010

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Also for APA L. Thanks to Lloyd Penney for taking on the task of collating *WOOF* last year, to Alan Stewart for agreeing to do it this year, and to John Hertz for spearheading the continuation of *WOOF* and also for delivering my own contribution to the Worldcon in recent years.

My otherwise complete collection of *WOOF* is still missing #6, which was collated in Denver in 1981, and the issue (probably #30 if it was given a number at all) that was collated in 2006 in Los Angeles. Ironically, the latter was collated in the area that I am originally from and where I know the most fans, and yet I have had remarkably little success in finding out about what happened to this collation or finding anyone who has a copy, though as a contributor I should have gotten one. I would be grateful to anyone who can fill me in on where to get a copy.

The latest news for me is that, after 40 years of teaching physics at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, I am *\*retiring\** at the end of August 31, 2010 (that means I will be retired for about 5 days when this *WOOF* is collated). For the time being I will continue to "officially" live in Edwardsville, Illinois and go back and forth between there and my home area of Altadena, California, but I will be able to spend more time in California than I have usually been able to do in the past. I believe I have enough hobbies to keep myself from being bored to death, and I might as well do them while I am still (hopefully) healthy. My already-retired colleagues tell me, "You'll wonder how you ever found time to work!"

In last year's *RFH* I brought up a word puzzle (shown me by Ed Buchman, though we don't know where it originated), asking what is "special" about the following words:

came	ohms	lava	inks
pail	akin	scar	condor
mane	arcade	condor	memorial

(There is no significance to the appearance of "condor" twice; it occurred by accident while I was arranging the table.) Some hints can be given, one being that all of the words have even numbers of letters, which suggests the possibility of *pairs* of letters having some significance. Another hint is to write the words in all capital letters. At this point I'm going to reveal the answer, so if you're still trying to figure it out yourself, please skip to the Road Thingie at the end. The "special" thing about these words is that all of them are made entirely out of the 2-letter state abbreviations that have become standard in the United States postal system. It happens that both last year's and this year's *WOOF* are in Worldcons held outside of the U.S., and some of you may not be familiar with these abbreviations, so I'll give a couple of examples: "ohms" = OH + MS = Ohio + Mississippi, and "arcade" = AR + CA + DE = Arkansas + California + Delaware.

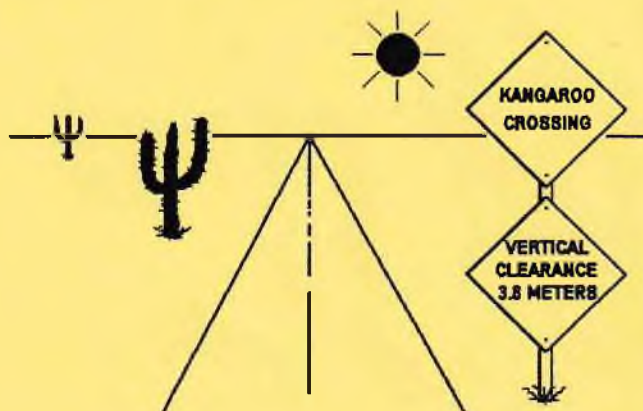
There are of course many other such words, which Ed and I have been calling "state words". In addition to the initial puzzle of noticing them, a whole host of additional puzzles can be formulated. These all assume some ground rules on what words are allowed; I've been assuming that the words are English words found in at least some dictionaries and which are not proper nouns or adjectives (i.e. don't have to be capitalized). The first question that occurred to me was: What is the *longest* state word? There are a few 2-letter words, a lot of 4-letter words, quite a few 6-letter words, and a smaller number of 8-letter words ("memorial" being by far the most common one we've found). With the help of dictionaries, and especially the web site [www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com) (which allows you for example to search for all 6-letter words with given third and fourth letters, etc.), the longest state word that I have found so far is the 10-letter word "cascarilla" (a tropical shrub whose bark is used for medicinal purposes, or a name for the bark itself). One can find some contrived words of this or even longer length, such as "megacondor" (=  $10^6$  condors, as in "the population of Region X is 0.6 megacondor") or "megamemorial" (a very large or elaborate memorial), but these are debatable as I don't think these would be found in dictionaries.

Another problem that Ed and I have tackled is finding, for each state, a state word in which that state appears. For example, given South Carolina (SC), the word "scar" uses it. So far we have *not* found any state words making use of AZ, MD, MN, MT, NH, NJ, NM, NV, TN, TX, VT, or WV.

One can expand the problem to include, along with the 50 states, the District of Columbia (DC) and U.S. territories. We decided to go with what the U.S. Mint issued quarters for: DC, PR (Puerto Rico), GU (Guam), AS (American Samoa), VI (Virgin Islands), and MP (Northern Mariana Islands), calling words that use them "statoid words". We have found statoid words using all of these except for DC. It is also possible that one of the above states for which there was no state-word solution may have a statoid-word solution. We have found just one case of this so far: Nevada (NV) appears in the statoid word "canvas".

Corresponding puzzles can be formulated for other countries; readers from this and the last Worldcon can most likely come up with solutions for Australia and Canada, for example.

On the following Road Thingie, I don't know if any such cacti actually exist in the desert areas of Australia, but if not, they can be considered specially transplanted there for the occasion . . .



## Tales From the Frozen North

Written by Dean Gahlon, who still resides at 4323 France Ave. S., in the city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, where the zip code continues to be 55410. His home phone number is still 612-929-2150, and his email address is still, after many years, [dean@visi.com](mailto:dean@visi.com). This is Rastaquouere Publications #???. (It's been several years since I did an apazine; it could be anything, really.)



I'd totally forgotten about WOOF until I arrived here at Aussiecon, and saw the announcement in the pocket program about the collation. Since there's going to be an issue, however, I'm going to try to produce a zine for it. If you're reading this, you'll know I've been successful. If you're not, then I'd have to say that I wasn't.

Since the last WOOF collation, I'd have to say that I haven't done much in the apazine world. Of course, there's the question of whether much of anybody has done much in the apazine world either. I know there are still a few apas around (my wife is OE of one (Once Upon A Time, discussing childrens' and YA fantasy)), but the apa space is pretty much filled by online discussion groups these days. As far as physical apas go, I haven't really done much since the beginning of 2003, except of course for whichever years WOOF has come out.

I'm still working at Medtronic, where I've been for almost 7 years now. I'll hit my 5-year mark as a full-time employee there in January. The group I'm in is still producing mobile software to support the field sales force; the mobile development stuff we get to use is pretty cool.

Of late, I've been getting more into ebooks. Part of the reason was this trip to Australia; I wanted to have reading matter for the trip, but didn't want to be burdened with lots of physical books. So, I bought a Nook ebook reader, and spent lots of my time before the trip finding ebooks to put into it. I picked the Nook because it accepts the epub format, which I think is more forward-looking than the other available formats. That, and I like the button arrangement a bit better than that on the Kindle.

At this point, I probably have more books loaded into it than I'll have time to read, but that's not a bad thing. One thing about having lots of books available is that I should have a book available to match my mood, whatever it is. Just in case, too, I have the entire set of books backed up on my netbook, where they can be re-downloaded into the Nook if it becomes necessary.

Speaking of netbooks, that's what I'm carrying for a computer at this convention. It's interesting comparing my 3 trips to Australia, and what I've carried for technology on each trip. The first trip, in 1985, I don't think I carried anything. The next trip, in 1999, I carried only a Palm III, and used a modem to read email. This trip, I'm carrying my netbook, my Ipod Touch, the aforementioned Nook, and all the cables and chargers necessary to power them all. I'd had hopes of being able to have a



fairly light backpack, but all the cables and ancillary stuff for the technology made that a bit tough. I've now added an Australian cellphone (the cheapest one available) and a Pocket Wifi device (this talks to a cell signal, and lets up to 5 devices connect to it via wifi, so I can have internet connectivity without paying the rates at the Crowne Plaza or the convention center (all of which range from expensive to very expensive), and are not friendly to having more than one device.

It looks like it's about time for me to head off to a panel I want to see, so this will be continued later.

I'm not going to do comments on the previous issue of WOOF, since I haven't the foggiest idea of where my copy is, except that it's somewhere in my house back in the States.

It looks like it's about time for me to finish and put this onto a thumbdrive, so I can go find a copy shop and print out the 100 copies for WOOF.