

brg No. 7 for ANZAPA is a magazine written and published by Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia (phone (03) 419-4797) for the February 1993 ANZAPA mailing.

Thanks, everybody!

That's about all I want to say for this issue. At least, that's all I have time to say. The Mighty OBE will visit Friday to gather whatever the OBP has had time to write for the February mailing.

Not much. That's what I'll tell him.

I was going to produce umpteen Mailing Comments, of course. No time. (Explanations below.)

I was going to thank everybody who voted for me for President. At least I have time to do *that*. As Marc Ortlieb said to me, the win comes exactly 20 years after I won the poll last time. According to Marc, the 1972 poll was actually the first Anzapapopoll. That I had forgotten. However, I do remember the ecstasy of finding out in 1972 that people liked my casual writing as well as all that heavy stuff in *SFC*.

I should have said thank you a few mailings ago. But I have done nothing fannish since about June last year. This is because the people who pay me the money to support my expensive hobbies ask me to work from time to time.

Since October last year I have been editing and typesetting (desktop publishing) a book called, invigoratingly, *HSC Personal Development, Health and Physical Education*. Its prefix is 'HSC' because it's for the NSW senior school market. (NSW hasn't switched to VCE yet.) It has an awkward title because the course is a vast grab bag of anything the course constructors thought would be good for the poor students. The authors followed the course faithfully and concisely, producing a manuscript of 776 pages. Usually I would expect a manuscript of 776 pages to turn into a book of 776 pages. This could not be. Nobody could afford to buy it.

I had to reduce the manuscript to a tolerable length, edit it, commission the illustrations, and typeset and design it on screen in Ventura. Preferably in no time, since rival textbooks were about to appear. I dropped everything else, worked almost every day from mid-October until now (I took Christmas Day off, but not New Year's Day), and produced the book. Which gives me little satisfaction. True, I now know a bit more about Ventura than I did before. True, I was able to hurl some illustrative work to a fellow fan, Ian Gunn (who did a superb job, against a tight deadline). True, it's nice to know that eight years of chiropractic treatment have left me healthy enough to complete such a project without dying in a heap. (By 1984 I was incapable of working more than three or four days a week without severe headaches and back pain.) And it's nice to know that I can legitimately take a few weeks of 'holiday' to produce the next *SF Commentary*, *Metaphysical Review* and ANZAPA and FAPA contributions. Any year now, Elaine and I might take a holiday.

But it's no satisfaction that I have abandoned letter-writing in a way that's insulting to people who have written to me. In particular, I apologise to Weller. She sent me a gratifying note thanking me for my mailing comments in the October issue. I was very pleased about that, but still I did not have time to answer. Then in the most recent mailing I find that Weller has been going through hell — back problems that make my own sufferings seem non-existent — but still managed to produce her own contribution. I apologise, and might even find time to write some letters when I finish this issue of *brg*.

The only unwelcome interruptions to my work schedule have been the result of events that began, for us, on 30 May 1992. That's when Roger Weddall and Geoff Roderick arrived at our place to tell us that the lump under Roger's arm had been diagnosed as lymphoma, but that it still seemed as if it could be treated successfully. At that time, we were sworn to secrecy, but Roger told a few more people about his condition when he cut short his DUFF trip to America in order to return to Australia for chemotherapy. When Roger returned, it was found that the cancer had travelled to a section of his spine, giving him dreadful

pain. Treatment actually removed the growth in his spine, but not until he had been placed on heavy painkillers. Also, no treatment could stop the growth and eventual spread of the original tumour.

About Roger's death we still feel disbelief more than any other emotion. Like some other Melbourne fans, we knew he was ill and in great pain during the last two public events he attended — the farewell party for Mark Loney, and Mark and Vanessa's wedding. But for Elaine and me, Roger *appeared* ill only about a fortnight before he died. Very few people ever saw him other than the exemplar of amiable energy photographed so well by Dick and Nicki Lynch in the latest issue of *Mimosa*. On 3 December, Geoff invited us to the hospital to say our own goodbyes. As when my father died, I felt that the unmoving shape on the bed had very little to do with the person we had known. After all, hadn't Roger always represented the spirit of Life Itself. And if that life disappears, cannot it reappear?

It seems appropriate that when many fans gathered at Rogers Street on the afternoon of 8 December after the funeral, they told Roger stories. There are thousands of them. When I write something properly for the next issue of *The Metaphysical Review*, I'll try to write a few of my own favourites. Jane Tissell is collecting a fanzineful of Roger stories and photographs. It should be a long volume.

In times of trouble, I trust the dream machine in my head to sort out difficulties for me. In one dream, I was sitting in the next room while Roger and Elaine were talking. I wanted to go in there and say, 'Why are you talking like this as if nothing is wrong? Roger will be dead tomorrow.' When I woke up, it took me some minutes to realise that it had been a dream. I dreamt it on the night after the funeral.

Another dream was surrealistic, but just as vivid. I was on an train travelling around a curved valley. The carriages of the train had running boards on the side, as in Western movies. Rocky Lawson appeared as a train-napper. He was climbing along the running boards outside the carriages, attempting to stop the train. He reached the engine, and I'm not sure what happened. The train stopped suddenly. Carriages spilled off the rails into the valley. People wandered around hurt and dazed, but nobody was killed. I was unharmed, but had no idea how to help the others. Suddenly Roger was there. I stared at him in disbelief. He shrugged. 'Sure, I'm back,' he said, as if I should never have doubted otherwise. 'I'll be leaving in a transcendental ascent into heaven next time, but you won't be there to see it. Now let's help these people.'

In another dream, I gained some idea of what it was like to be Roger. In the dream, Melbourne University's Union building was a giant glass palace featuring a double-storey restaurant. I was at one huge table of diners, and went to get some extra wine for the table. As I looked down the sweeping staircase between the two floors, I saw the other group of diners I had promised to be with that night. I went down to talk to them, and they begged me to stay. But I still had to fetch the wine for the table upstairs! I had no idea how to resolve the situation. At the end of the dream, dressed in nothing but shirt and shorts, I was running in the driving rain away from the Union building.

I suspect my dream showed me what life was often like for Roger. He promised so much to everybody that often he was caught in the middle of all these people (Elaine and me, among many others), unable entirely to enjoy the celebration.

But Roger enjoyed a lot of his life. What I'm really mourning is life for all of us who are left. We're all stuck for someone to talk to in an emergency. We don't know to whom we can tell all those secrets and jokes we could only tell Roger. We don't really believe what's happened. And maybe we never will.

Page filler:

Usually I provide a list of books I've read since I last appeared in ANZAPA. Not enough room on this page, and I'm determined not to go to a Page 3. Eventually I'll write my Lists for *TMR* or *SFC*, and I've already done some preliminary lists for Justin Ackroyd's *Slow Glass Catalogue*. After trying to choose between four different books, I decided that *The Last Magician*, by Janette Turner Hospital, was my Favourite Novel and Favourite Book for 1992. I picked Ursula Le Guin's *Tehanu* as Favourite SF or Fantasy Book, but against severe competition. Since Justin isn't too interested in my musical tastes, I was saved the agony of picking my favourite CD for the year. That's easy: *Songs of the Cat*, by Garrison Keillor and Frederica von Staede. Most of the close seconds are CD reissues of LPs that I had worn out (the Faces' *Long Player* and *A Nod Is as Good as a Wink to a Blind Horse* and Dave Bromberg's *Wanted — Dead or Alive*). But the outstanding new record (that is, I hadn't heard it before) was Warren Zevon's *Warren Zevon*. And Warren Zevon was the Concert of the Year.

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