
brg No. 21, June 1998, is a magazine written and published by Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 (phone & fax (03) 9419- 4797; E-mail: gandc@mira.net) for ANZAPA and a Few Select Others.
Cover graphic by Ditmar, using Bryce2.

Get Netted

As the colophon reveals, the Gillespie & Cochrane household now has an Internet account ('g&c' = 'gandc', see?).

Why are people addicted to the Internet? Quite apart from the fact that it took six weeks to find out why we were sending some people two messages each time we sent them one message, we've found it a lot of bother to send messages that could just as easily be sent by picking up the phone or sending a fax.

Internetters expect answers to queries, no matter how trivial the question. My attitude to letters is that they should be left until I can no longer avoid answering them; the 90 per cent I can avoid answering I gather up unanswered after six months and shove in the back of a filing cabinet. The best letter is a letter of comment, written as a mini-essay. But people on the Internet get hostile if you don't spend an hour a night thinking up boring answers to (often) unnecessary questions!

As for the Web . . . ! I thought this would be the fun part of the Internet. Type in a few words into your search engine and explore the world of information? Wrong. Type in the words you really want to find. Go through an endless maze of search and double-back until you find the Web address you want. What's the answer? 'This address does not answer'. 'URL Error Message 404.' This is a system?

I still don't have the faintest idea of how to write a Web page or set it up, although our provider allows five megabytes of Web space free. Everybody says 'It's easy', but nobody has shown us how to do it yet. Dennis Callegari has offered, but somehow we've never arranged for him to visit. John Bangsund has offered to do it for a very reasonable professional rate, but at the moment I don't have the money to pay anybody for anything.

That's hardly the point. I haven't yet found any good writing on the Web, except for John Bangsund's *Threepenny Planet*. (I tried to find Sean McMullen's Australian SF Bibliography last night, but couldn't.) What's the use of Web pages when all they carry is advertising or indexes? Doesn't anybody have anything interesting to say out there? I subscribed to Timebinders, only to find that most of the messages are utterly trivial. I hoped that somebody might have put pages from famous fanzines on the Timebinders Web site, but I found only Contents lists.

It's hardly surprising that I still believe that a proper, well-edited, printed fanzine is the only worthwhile form

of communication. Sure, it costs a fortune, which I don't have. A benefactor has offered to finance the next *Metaphysical Review*, and I'm typing as fast as I can when I can. But of course I must stop every few days to do paying work, since that's what pays all the other bills. The next *SF Commentary*? It's all on hard disk. It's a fabulous issue. At the moment there's not the slightest chance of publishing it, since I'm not earning enough to raise the \$2000 to print and post it. Put it on the Web? Yes, but would the people I want to read it even know it's there?

I can't stand what's happening to my friends

I'm grumpy because **Allan Bray** is dead. This sort of thing just has to stop! Here's a great bloke, who seems to have had all sorts of difficulties for years, who eleven years ago met and married a lovely lady named Lesley, and they accomplished all sorts of things that Allan never would have tried on his own, such as working towards a university degree, and then the dreaded brain tumour has to hit him! It seemed as if surgery last year had succeeded in removing the tumour, and he and Lesley had re-enrolled at university for 1998. But the tumour returned, and Allan died in late April. He was a valued member of ANZAPA during the 1980s, and a mainstay of South Australian fandom. I'm glad he was able to travel to ANZAPAc on a few years ago.

I'm grumpy because **Jackie Causgrove** is dead. Jackie Franke, as she was then, once rescued me from a very difficult fix. In late September 1973 I was standing at the counter at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, ten minutes to go before boarding my aircraft back to Australia, with my luggage already on the plane, when I found that my ticket would not allow me to go home to Australia from USA. I had to go to Britain first, or pay \$700 on the spot to convert my ticket. I couldn't afford the \$700 but I could just afford to stay in Britain briefly on the way back to Australia. I wandered around O'Hare in a daze for half an hour, then found the only phone number I had for the Chicago area: that of Jackie and Wally Franke. I rang Jackie, who immediately drove 40 miles to rescue me. I had only my hand luggage with me. American Airlines assured me that they could retrieve my main luggage, but it would take a week to travel to Sydney and back. Jackie and Wally found me some spare clothes and put me up for that week. We visited the Passevoys in Chicago, and some other Chicago fans, and the next weekend travelled to Bob Tucker's to stay the night. It



Brian and Margaret Aldiss, with unkempt visitor from Australia, Heath House, January 1974. (Photo: Chris Priest.)

was a great week. My luggage came back. I continued my trip, and eventually spent four weeks in Britain. In later years Jackie stopped writing to me, for reasons I'm not sure of. She and Wally split up, and somewhere in the late seventies she began living with Dave Locke, who was with her until she died of lung cancer on 15 May.

I'm grumpy because **Margaret Aldiss** has died. I met her only once, but once was enough to show me why she was one of the most valued convention attendees in Britain. She was Brian's greatest supporter, and his bibliographer: just one of those people you cannot imagine as not alive any more.

I'm grumpy because **Bill Rotsler** is gone, and had such a difficult last couple of years. For a splendid tribute, see the latest issue of *Trap Door*. The bright lights are going out all over fandom.

I'm grumpy because several of our other friends are suffering from cancer, and don't yet know whether the debilitating combination of surgery and chemotherapy will work. Some of these people, such as **Ian Gunn**, are a lot younger than I am. Worse, Ian has had to undergo a second round of chemotherapy recently. I haven't yet heard any news of how he and **Karen** are going.

I'm grumpy because our friends' twenty-five-year-old marriages are ending. Nothing we can do about it, of course, but it was disturbing to hear within a week about the recent splitup of **Sally Yeoland** and **John Bangsund** (see my Mailing Comment to Sally towards the end of the issue) and the December splitup of **Lee Harding** and **Irene Pagram**. I have vivid memories of 1972, when both couples got together. From Canberra came fanzines and letters of delirious happiness from John. In Melbourne there were amazing scenes when Lee, then aged in his mid thirties, and Irene, then aged seventeen, became entangled with each other and with my life, which was doing odd things at the time. Two years later, I attended the welcome for John and Sally at John's mother's place. In 1982, Elaine and I went to Lee and Irene's wedding in a garden in Ferntree Gully, where we blissed out in October sunshine. Maddie was born, and we've watched her growing rapidly. Through the seventies and eighties

Irene and Lee endured some hard times that would have battered anybody's marriage. We saw Irene and Lee together most recently at George Turner's funeral, which seems to have become a major dividing line in everybody's fortunes. We didn't hear from them for more than six months. Race Mathews tracked down Lee, who told him about the December breakup. And about Lee's heart attack in late February. Lee is feeling much better. He's living at Rosebud, and Irene is still living in Echuca. Maddie is trying to commute between between them. Best wishes to Sally and John, and Irene and Lee and Maddy. What more can I say?

I'm grumpy because **Polly** doesn't like **Violet**. In retrospect, I suppose I should be grumpy with Elaine for importing Violet after TC died. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, and the combination of the four cats left after TC died was working well. But we had to have a fifth cat, it seems. When we've introduced a new cat in the past, we've never before had more than a week of hissing, booing and pawcuffs. Also we've never before had a young cat named Polly who remains determined to oust the newcomer. But then, we've never had before a cat such as Violet, who came from who-knows-where via the vet's. She likes people, but is totally unused to the company of other cats. She has no more desire to get on with them than they have to get on with her. The new arrangement would have worked if only Polly hadn't decided to go into heatseeker-missile mode every time she sensed the presence of Violet. If Violet had fought back, Polly would have had to pull her head in. Instead Violet sometimes hits Sophie, who runs away from her. The only way we keep any sort of peace is to allow Violet to sleep on the bed during the day and shoo out Polly.

I'm double grumpy because the owners of buildings on both sides of our place are doing renovations, and have been doing so for more than six months, and the workers at one building have pulled down a part of the shared side fence, have not put up the new fence but instead have put up a temporary wire-mesh fence through which **Theodore** keeps finding escape holes. Theodore seems to have developed some evidence of a

brain in (catty) middle age. Last night was his most successful escape. We're still not quite sure how he got out. He must have got locked in somewhere around Collingwood, because he was back at 6 a.m. Elaine did not sleep all night. I slept okay. I might feel grumpy at cats, but I refuse to let their idiocies spoil my sleep.

Sometimes not so grumpy

Good things happen. Not many of them, and not often.

As I've already written, a friend has sent me the money to guarantee the publication of the next issue of *The Metaphysical Review*. Now I just need the time to finish setting it. At the same time, **Irwin Hirsh** told me about Kodak's FlashPix CD system, which should solve the difficulties I've had when including photos in my magazines. I sent in 66 fabulous fannish photos for scanning onto CD. The cost, including the cost of the CD itself, was \$74. If I want more done, I send back the CD, plus the extra photos. Each CD can fit 100. The images themselves need to be read by Kodak's own software, which is installed from the CD, but each image can be unzipped into a TIF or BMP. Not that I'm ever going to run 66 photos here or in TMR, but at least now they are available for anybody who's interested.

Merv Binns and **Helena Roberts** got married. Merv, at the age of sixty-two, married for the first time. One of the original members of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, he remained a stalwart bachelor during all the years he kept the Club going, supplying books to us while he was manager of McGill's Newsagency, then owner of Space Age Books. He went broke, and supported his father during his final illness.

Helena joined the Melbourne Science Fiction Club in the 1950s. She married a photographer named Kelvin Roberts, who died about ten years ago. Merv and Helena seem to have been gravitating towards each other ever since. Although it was held on the hottest late March day ever (summer was supposed to have ended weeks before), the wedding was very enjoyable. The ceremony took place on the front lawn of Merv and Helena's house in Carnegie, followed by a wedding banquet in the back garden, with sumptuous amounts of food supplied by contributions from friends. As an example of how to hold a wedding when you're broke, it couldn't be better. Helena was definitely radiant, and Merv was seen to smile, except he came over all emotional as he told us how much it meant if his mother and father could have been there.

Recently Elaine and I went bush. Sort of. **John and Louise Gauci** were our very quiet neighbours, in the office building on the corner of Keele and Budd Streets, from the late 1980s until October last year. They set up their company, LJ Productions, to produce children's TV series, and had great success with *Sugar and Spice*, *Pugwall* and *Pugwall's Summer*. However, they've been underemployed during the last few years, and had to sell the building next door. At first we had little to do with them, although Louise always admired our cats, especially Monty and Sophie. When we got Sophie, she was the mirror image of LJ, the office cat. Sophie spread out wider and wider, and the resemblance ended, but

Sophie often stared at LJ through their front door. Louise expressed interest when Elaine began to grow treelets for the Tree Project, so Elaine offered to try any seed Louise could provide from the 'block at Launching Place'. Eventually, six months after we stopped being neighbours, John and Louise took us to see the fabled block at Launching Place.

For some reason, I thought Launching Place was way off in netherest Gippsland. But it's part of the Yarra Valley; houses and small towns line the road all the way out beyond Seville to Launching Place. John and Louise said that the drought had been obvious at the block, but recent rain made it seem very green when we arrived there. The headwaters of the Yarra form one edge of the block. The rest is mainly paddock, which is now turning into a tree plantation, thanks to the many trees bought by John and Louise or donated by Elaine. There are also two long rows of grapevines, and a large patch of the dreaded black-berries. The only living quarters is a tin shed, which contains a small tractor and some camping implements. If John and Louise leave anything else there, such as tools, it gets stolen. Many fishing enthusiasts and walkers probably walk through the block, down the bank of Yarra, without realising they are travelling through private land.

John and Louise are able to get away from it all because they haven't taken it all with them. They say the pleasure of the place is simply getting away from the city for the weekend. They are clearing the blackberries, harvesting the grapes in season, gathering up the rubbish that the fishing fraternity leave behind, and generally keeping the place green and alive.

Since I can't put a name to each tree in the valley, John and I stayed behind while Elaine and Louise went to inspect the treelets. John was a producer/director for the ABC until the early 1980s, and worked on such famous mini-series as *I Can Jump Puddles* and *Power Without Glory*. He knows everybody, and has lots of good gossip about the TV and film industry.

After giving us a barbecue lunch, John and Louise then drove us to the other side of the city to inspect their new studio. Although they could not keep up the bank payments on the Keele Street place, selling it enabled them to buy a double-storey house in a quiet suburban cul de sac in Yarraville. The house has plenty of room for their current scale of operations, and came complete with its own house cat, Booby. Yarraville itself is unique: Melbourne's best-kept secret. No main road runs through the shopping centre, which consists of several narrow streets lined by a wide variety of useful and trendy little shops. I can't think of another little patch of Melbourne that is so self-consciously picturesque. Perhaps the secret of Yarraville is already out: John and Louise said that almost every other house is being renovated at the moment.

Back to Keele Street, and the realisation that Wellington Street now seems horribly noisy, even on a Sunday. Ah well . . . but at least we did leave our house for a whole day. Who knows? Maybe one day we'll get back to Mount Buffalo, or even go interstate. No, I don't believe *that*.

Favourites 1997

FAVOURITE BOOKS 1997

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 <i>Titan</i>
Stephen Baxter (1997; HarperCollins Voyager; 581 pp.)2 <i>The Voice That Thunders: Essays and Lectures</i>
Alan Garner (1997; Harvill; 244 pp.)3 <i>Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady</i>
Florence King (1985; St Martin's Press; 278 pp.)4 <i>The Secret of this Book: 20-Odd Stories</i>
Brian W. Aldiss (1995; HarperCollins; 334 pp.)5 <i>Sirius</i>
Olaf Stapledon (1944; Dover; 157 pp.)6 <i>Strandloper</i>
Alan Garner (1996; Harvill; 200 pp.)7 <i>Windows</i>
D. G. Compton (1979; Berkeley Putnam; 255 pp.)8 <i>Seasons in Flight</i>
Brian Aldiss (1984; Jonathan Cape; 157 pp.)9 <i>At the Caligula Hotel and Other Poems</i>
Brian Aldiss (1995; Sinclair-Stevenson; 99 pp.)10 <i>Fermat's Last Theorem</i>
Simon Singh (1997; 4th Estate; 362 pp.) | <ol style="list-style-type: none">11 <i>Collected Poems</i>
Philip Larkin (1988; Marvell Press/Faber & Faber; 330 pp.)12 <i>Last and First Men</i>
Olaf Stapledon (1930; Methuen; 355 pp.)13 <i>Gather Yourselves Together</i>
1994; WCS Books; 291 pp.)14 <i>Barefaced Messiah: The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard</i>
Russell Miller (1987; Michael Joseph; 390 pp.)15 <i>Keepers of the Flame: Literary Estates and the Rise of Biography</i>
Ian Hamilton (1992; Pimlico; 344 pp.)16 <i>Tourists</i>
Lisa Goldstein (1989; Simon & Schuster; 239 pp.)17 <i>Star Maker</i>
Olaf Stapledon (1937; Penguin)18 <i>King Solomon's Carpet</i>
Barbara Vine (1991; Penguin; 356 pp.)19 <i>From Time to Time</i>
Jack Finney (1995; Simon & Schuster; 303 pp.)20 <i>The Year's Best Australian Science Fiction & Fantasy</i>
edited by Jonathan Strahan & Jeremy G. Byrne (1997; HarperCollins; 365 pp.) |
|---|---|

FAVOURITE FILMS 1997

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 <i>Touch of Evil (complete)</i>
directed by Orson Welles (1958)2 <i>Fearless</i>
Peter Weir (1993)3 <i>Eating Raoul</i>
Paul Bartels (1982)4 <i>Groundhog Day</i>
Harold Ramis (1993)5 <i>In Country</i>
Norman Jewison (1989)6 <i>Cape Fear</i>
J. Lee Thompson (1962)7 <i>Crumb</i>
Terry Swigart (1994) | <ol style="list-style-type: none">8 <i>Giant</i>
George Stevens (1956)9 <i>Gettysburg</i>
Ronald F. Maxwell (1992)10 <i>In the Name of the Father</i>
Jim Sheridan (1995)11 <i>Rats in the Ranks</i>
Bob Connelly and Robin Anderson (1996)12 <i>Forrest Gump</i>
Robert Zemekis (1994)13 <i>The Fly</i>
David Cronenberg (1986)14 <i>Twelve Monkeys</i>
Terry Gilliam (1995)15 <i>Edge of Eternity</i>
Don Siegel (1959) |
|--|--|
-

FAVOURITE SHORT FICTION 1997

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 <i>Tom Fobble's Day</i>
Alan Garner (<i>Collins</i>)</p> <p>2 <i>'A Man and His Dreams'</i>
Marele Day (<i>The Year's Best Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy</i>)</p> <p>3 <i>'Ratbird'</i>
Brian W. Aldiss (<i>A Tupolev Too Far</i>)</p> <p>4 <i>'The God Who Slept with Women'</i>
Brian W. Aldiss (<i>The Secret of this Book</i>)</p> <p>5 <i>'Horse Meat'</i>
Brian W. Aldiss (<i>The Secret of this Book</i>)</p> <p>6 <i>'A Swedish Birthday Present'</i>
Brian W. Aldiss (<i>The Secret of this Book</i>)</p> | <p>7 <i>'A Day in the Life of the Galactic Empire'</i>
Brian W. Aldiss (<i>The Secret of this Book</i>)</p> <p>8 <i>'Glory'</i>
Nicholas Royle (<i>Narrow Houses, Vol. I</i>)</p> <p>9 <i>'Passing the Bone'</i>
Sean Williams (<i>The Year's Best Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy</i>)</p> <p>10 <i>'Naming Names'</i>
Pat Cadigan (<i>Narrow Houses, Vol. I</i>)</p> <p>11 <i>'Another Orphan'</i>
John Kessel (<i>Meeting in Infinity</i>)</p> <p>12 <i>'Jackie Chan'</i>
Chris Gregory (<i>Twins</i>)</p> |
|--|--|
-

I can be your long lost pal

The mailing comments

MAILING No. 179, DECEMBER 1997

Eric Lindsay: GEGENSCHEN KINGDOM OF THE BLAND

I have such a leisurely attitude to keeping up with ANZAPA that Eric has suffered his heart attack (announced by the OBE at the beginning of this mailing) and, it seems, fully recovered from it, but there's not a word about it here, because this *Geg* precedes the whole episode. Usually the meandering story of fandom resembles any thousand episodes of *Blue Hills*, but not in 1997 and 1998! Take your attention away for a second and someone else has succumbed to something or other. But not, fortunately, Eric.

Ken Ward. Now there's a name from the past! Is this the same Ken Ward who was one of the two people (Roger was the other) who left 10 Johnston Street when I moved in at the beginning of 1977? It's a bit hard to imagine Ken twenty years on, but I dare say I'll recognise him if he turns up at Aussiecon.

Otherwise, there aren't many Canberra fans I could name, except Kim Huett, Susan and Kelly Hryckiewicz, Lin Wolfe, Colin Steele (if he calls himself a fan), and the Hydys (if they are still around). I've never met Gayle or Rob Lovett. Tell us more about the Canberra scene, Eric. And thanks for the news of *Sirius*, which had seemed to disappear. Perhaps it's on a Web page as well as on disk.

Best quote of the mailing: 'Sometimes I think there is a serious frivolity problem in Australian fandom.' I'm not volunteering to fix it.

An even better quote: 'Robin reported on his latest trip, and what he had lost in the way of luggage.' My

favourite Robin Johnson luggage story is that of Robin and the jar of honey. Yes, inside his airport luggage. You can guess the rest of the story.

Thanks for the Basicon report. The nicest thing about it was seeing Ian on his feet, and he and Karen having a good time. We haven't heard anything about him for awhile, which is worrying in view of the return of his cancer. It was a low-key convention (my favourite kind), but I suppose I would have liked slightly more stimulation from the program. Still, there's nothing quite so stimulating as winning an unexpected Ditmar. Since it's mainly ANZAPAns who see my writing these days, I must thank everybody who voted for me. I just wish I could afford to give my stuff a wider audience.

The last time I twirled the handle of a duplicator, total operational costs still worked out to about a quarter of a cent a side. No wonder it was annoying to be forced to change over to offset because duplicating supplies are no longer available.

IMAX is just about to open in Melbourne, but there is quite a backlog of IMAX films, including the one on Antarctica. Let's hope the film about Mir gets here.

I downloaded *Emerald City* from the Web once, and Cheryl sent the next issue to me directly. Hers reads very well on paper. I refuse to read any fanzine on screen. Now I have to discover the other fanzines that I can download directly, since a lot of the well-known fanzines never reach me.

I must investigate Ghost. I get very annoyed at having to reinstall the whole system each time the hard disk goes down.

Marc Ortlieb: ENERGY No. 178

You had a story rejected by *The Mentor*? I'm impressed.

The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer is a great favourite of this household. Elaine liked it, and usually she doesn't like films. It can claim to be more accurately prophetic than any conventional SF film.

Michael O'Brien: MODULE No. 128

David King, was you might remember, the editor of one collection of stories for Norstrilia Press (*Dreamworks*) and one for Ebony Books (*Urban Fantasies*). In all my correspondence with him during the mid-1980s, I found him a rather remote figure, immured in academia and seemingly unconnected with anybody's real world. When we got on the Internet, one of the first messages I received, from the same David King, was an earnest plea for Carl Barks Disney comics of the 1950s! My real problem is finding them. I have reservoirs of them in two boxes, and I suspect there are more somewhere else in the house, which means they are perhaps lost forever. David King said that comics fans are offering as much as \$50 each for Australian Disney reprint comics from the 1950s. The way my career is going these days, I just might take the filthy lucre and forget about the nostalgia. (But how could I ever give up a copy of *Uncle Scrooge* which has the story 'Searching for the Horseradish'? Or 'The Seven Cities of Cibola', with that extraordinary one-page panel at the end? Excuse me, Bill Wright, but Carl Barks made E. E. Smith seem like an amateur in the sensawonder stakes.)

I haven't seen any of the TV series you mention. Almost the only thing I watch these days is *The Movie Show* on SBS.

Sorry to hear about the thefts: shudder! 1997 will be forever to me the Year of the Burglary, which happened on the same night as George Turner died.

If you read my apazines, you would have seen my obituary for George Turner from *The Australian*. Judy Buckrich managed to place obits in *The Age* and *Australian Book Review*, and Lucy placed notices in several places, including the *Herald Sun*. But, you're right; the real interest in George's work is in America, not here. Almost nobody literary in Australia ever saw copies of George's SF books.

Lyn McConchie: FANATIC No. 60

Your reply to Bill Wright's *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop* is so wonderfully surreal that it's a vivid reminder of just how surreal *IRS* often is. (Here's what you said in reply to Bill: 'Firstly, I don't have an orchard, secondly, I don't WANT pilgrims sitting at my feet, thirdly, any wisdom I imparted to them would probably severely imperil their immortal souls, and fourthly, I'm not sure I want any book of mine taken up by any newly emancipated Chinese establishment in 2001.' Of course.)

Sally Yeoland: LE CHAT PARTI No. 32

Thanks for the tribute to Graeme Foyster. I'm tempted to ask permission to reprint it in the next *Metaphysical Review*, but people have already sent me a large number of obituaries, more than I have room to publish. If I had room, for instance, I would love to reprint John Foyster's tribute to his father.

It has not been a great year for people with the name Foyster or in any way associated with the name Foyster. I did not meet John's father until Graeme and Jenny's wedding, and met him again only at Graeme's funeral.

Elaine and I never would have met Graeme except for Jenny. At first I felt I could never get to know him at all, and it was only during the last three or four years of his life that we felt part of each others' lives. Graeme and Jenny's joint birthday party a few years ago was an occasion when I could get some idea of how much Graeme meant to those close to him.

But, Sally, some of the things you write about Graeme were unsuspected by me until you wrote this tribute, so thanks very much.

All that work that Richard Hryckiewicz put into my computer last September was not entirely successful. Eight months later, the hard disk failed. When I put in a new one, I realised that all sorts of things had always been wrong on the one that we bought in September! It was a lemon from the start; then it turned into lemonade. I didn't lose much data, but the real drag is the taking the best part of three days to reinstall all the software. At least, this time I didn't lose any fonts. But I've still never been able to replace Slimbach Book, which I lost when the hard disk failed on the other machine a year and a half ago.

Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP, Dec. 1997

I agree that the Astor is just about the only cinema where I would want to see movies (if the recent renovations haven't ruined the place), but I thought you didn't get to see movies at the cinema these days, Bill.

This issue of *IRS* poses the usual problem: no matter how good Stefan's work is, he is not a member of the apa, and we want to read your work, Bill, not his. Still, the 'Animal World News' was quite good, as were Stefan's pieces on dentistry and mental exercise. Perhaps I am unfit because I cannot even *imagine* myself doing most forms of exercise and sport. I don't even have dreams about doing exercise. The only dreams I've had recently have been about threatened inundation by tidal waves. What would the Freudians say about that?

We already have a Cat Pleasure Garden.

I agree that all salaries, wages and other incomes should be the reverse of what they are now, with the highest salaries to people who make things and know about things and find out about things, and the lowest salaries to unproductive people who merely tell other people what to do and push money around.

Dick Jensen's mathematical book list is much appreciated. I own two or three of these books, and never see the others in book shops. I dare not search for books on AMAZON.COM; madness and abject poverty would follow.

Richard Hryckiewicz: ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE No. 19

We got to know Buffy pretty well when Ali was living in the giant loft in Collingwood, so it was quite a blow to hear that she had disappeared so suddenly and completely. Theodore keeps doing his best to disappear, but hasn't succeeded yet.

John Newman: PING!

I've spent my whole life battling with Fear. Fear of bullies, of heights, of dogs, of footballs and cricket balls, of being laughed at while attempting to play sport — and that was just in childhood. During the teenage years I feared rejection by girls, failure in exams, metalwork and woodwork, and, of course, bullies, dogs, heights and footballs and cricket balls. (Add volleyballs.) During my young adult years I grew to fear poverty, failure in gaining employment, rejection by women, and rejection by almost everybody else. At long last I didn't need to fear footballs and cricket balls because finishing school meant the finish of compulsory sport. And now in late adult life I have to fear death, disease (sudden and incipient), inability to find work or earn enough to secure a retirement income, and as always, heights, dogs, rejection and general failure. If only I could write a novel about these fears I could avoid one of my regretful fears: that my life will end before I've written anything substantial.

So best wishes to your father; I know something of what he feels, and anticipate that such feelings will become more insistent as the years go on.

My sympathies for your need to release a new version of your software whether or not a new version is needed. No wonder most software is filled with bloat.

Michael Green: REALITY MODULE No. 1

Don't send your manuscript to a manuscript evaluation service, although people like me are always willing to offer such a service at \$35 per hour. Keep sending out the manuscript, preferably to publishers who put out books that you like to read. (I don't follow this advice, because I've never finished writing a novel, but it seems to be what works for people who do eventually begin a writing career.)

Greg Egan seems to write a lot about uploading. Perhaps he anticipated the idea of your novel. Perhaps it's best not to read him, since he's rapidly running through all the good ideas in science and epistemology.

All I can do is agree with your fine essay about the difference between intelligence and pseudo-intelligence. It's possible that we haven't begun to grasp the nature of the brain, despite extensive brain mapping, because we have to find out how the whole brain fires, giving rise to 'consciousness'. Consciousness doesn't seem possible, let alone knowable and reproducible.

I trust that you have sent a copy of your essay to Damien Broderick (23 Hutchinson Street, Brunswick VIC 3056)?

Jeanne Mealy: LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

Deep horror, sorrow and sympathy to hear that yet another fine ANZAPA member has been robbed. I'm not sure why we were lucky enough *not* to be relieved of our computers; possibly because they were two years old, and therefore too ancient for the modern burglar. Also, we're pretty sure they were disturbed when coming back for the real loot. Is there any country left where one can leave the house unattended without fearing visits from burglars? As recently as the 1970s in Carlton, I had no such fear. The bottom door at 72 Carlton Street wouldn't lock, so we didn't worry about it. In 1978, during my second year at 10 Johnston Street, Collingwood, the little bloke downstairs was robbed but we weren't. Things have gone downhill in Collingwood ever since.

It sounds as if the job situation for many American fans is just what the government (any government) has picked out for Australians: no security, no permanency, nothing except endless layoffs.

MAILING No. 180, FEBRUARY 1998

Eric Lindsay: KINGDOM OF THE BLAND

Since I'm as likely a candidate for heart attack as anybody in this apa, I'd better ask you, Eric: just what are the early symptoms that you thought you could ignore? And at what point were you sure it was a heart attack and not something else?

I get feelings of tightness around the chest and abdomen, rather like bad indigestion, but they've always gone away quickly when Elaine has done massage on my spine. But these are also, I'm told, classic heart attack symptoms.

Lee Harding was saying that his recent heart attack was misdiagnosed as digestive problems for three days before he was zoomed off to hospital! Luckily, he was sent to the right bed in the right hospital, and had a stent put in the main artery within 14 minutes of the beginning of the operation.

The only advantage I might gain from the recent drop in the value of the dollar is if some more of George Turner's work sells overseas. It looks as if his last novel will be published, but none of the paperwork has been

done yet and certainly no money has changed hands. I would like to sell a book of George's non-fiction to remind people of the work that put George on the map in the 1960s and 1970s, but I doubt if there's any money in it. I can't publish it myself, because I have no capital or storage room.

Race Mathews' article on the history of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club (*TMR* 22/23) has prompted Graham Stone to write a long letter for the next *TMR* about his own fan history, but you're right . . . there seems to be almost complete ignorance about fan history these days.

Duplicators: the point remains: if I'd kept my old duplicator I would no longer be able to produce anything on it, because I would no longer be able to buy old-style duplicating ink, paper or stencils.

In Melbourne it doesn't rain more often than *anywhere* these days. The drought still hasn't broken, although we've had light overnight rainfalls with the last few cool changes.

I haven't seen any advertisement for Library of the

Future or books from the Gutenberg Project. They sound tempting. I have the text version of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Its only disadvantage is that it installs Navigator 2.0 as its browser, but in a version that can't be used for anything else. The new multimedia version of *Britannica* arrives, I'm told, on two CDs. If I had the money I would get the *National Geographic* on CD.

Terry Morris: HOLD THAT TIGER!

Deep shudder at any thought of moving house. And renovating as well! Deeper shudder.

Elaine has already spent six years removing rubble and bricks from our new garden. Most of the junk seems to be the remains of the two houses that were on the one block before 1914, when our house and the house next door were built. The house next door was pulled down to make a car park, which was in turn sold to us, and which Elaine has been converting into a garden. Elaine has found plenty of nineteenth-century household objects, usually broken, such as bottles and pieces of china dolls.

Who is Sister Wendy? Is she on free-to-air TV?

Isn't it a universal truth that grandmothers are better with grandchildren than they were with their own children?

A friend of ours who has been working in Sydney for the last month or so has just discovered the ferries. The ferry from Parramatta to the terminal takes exactly the same time as the train from Parramatta to Central. As he said, ferries are the trams of Sydney.

Roger Sims:

THE FAN EDITOR WHO COULD NOT MEET A DEADLINE

If ever we buy a disposal unit we will make sure we have the quarter-inch Hex wrench handy at all times. It's probably easier never to buy a disposal unit.

Thank you very much for handing on the secrets of producing trufanzines. Over the years I've seen descriptions of the hectograph process, but nothing quite as vivid as the story of the 'fudge' in the pan. My first 'fanzine', long before I knew of the existence of fanzines, was spirit duplicated. I reverted to carbon paper (four copies, none of which I kept) for a year or so. When I joined fandom in 1968, John Bangsund showed me all the secrets of duplicating. Unfortunately, my first duplicator turned out to be thirty years old, so I had some mechanical problems. The *SFCs* produced on that old Gestetner during 1971 and 1972 looked good, because until 1974 I could buy high-quality stencils. From then on, the quality (but not the price) of stencils declined rapidly, as did the quality of duplicating paper.

In my head I'm forever aged twenty-six. Unfortunately I wear a heavy fleshly disguise and my hair has turned the wrong colour and nobody would believe I'm a day under twenty-seven.

Yes, I have a VisaCard, and would expect to use it if and when I ever travel overseas again. I'd need to ask for an extension to the credit limit before making the trip, since I've kept it to \$1000 ever since the unfortunate incident in 1987 when Elaine had to bail out my Bankcard to the tune of \$3000 and made me cut it up.

It's a while since I've read the collected stories of Alfred Bester, so cannot remember the name of the

story you want to trace. A new comprehensive collection of his stories has just appeared. I can't remember its name, but as it's in *Slow Glass* it's probably in your local SF bookshop.

George developed his ideas about SF in complete isolation, and then found fanzines and an editor who would publish his reviews. Since George's early novels are literary, non-SF novels, it's hardly surprising that he would want to show that a good SF novel should also be good literature, since it was true then, and remains true, that most people in Australian literature regard 'SF' and 'literature' as mutually exclusive terms. In the late sixties and early seventies he had support from many readers who saw the chance for SF to 'become literature'. That impulse seems to have faded, although it seems to me that each year since the 1960s about the same number of truly literate SF novels are published, i.e. ten in a good year, and about six in an average year.

Several Australian prime ministers have been famous for their sexual profligacy, although details of their adventures usually don't hit the newspapers until after they've left office. Australian prime ministers do not get hit with Whitewater-like allegations, but I've never sure whether or not this is because they avoid financial hanky-panky or because they are much better than American presidents at covering their tracks. At any rate, Clinton is still in office, and still popular, so perhaps the mud thrown at him won't stick until after he's out of office.

Leanne Frahm:

FROG OF FROG HALL'S CHRISTMAS STORY

Perhaps you should be writing handy little books about Windows for computer fools like me. 'I didn't know you could do that on this' must be the sweetest music in the ear of anybody who's wrestled (no, rassed) with a Windows program.

I seem to have had nothing but failing computers for the last two years or so. I don't have airconditioning, and I run my computer during summer. That seems to be the reason why everything failed in early 1997. Then the horrible upgrade, described in detail by Richard Hryckiewicz in an earlier mailing of ANZAPA. Then the gradually failing *new* 4.2 gigabyte hard disc. The weeks of work lost. The anguish. The horror. When I have my first heart attack I will blame it on the computer, or cats, or both.

I thought willy-willies and waterspouts were rare in Australia, but Dick Jenssen, former head of the Department of Meteorology at the University of Melbourne (and founder member of the Melbourne SF Club), tells us that Australia has the second highest rate of tornadoes, willy-willies and waterspouts after the USA, but we don't notice them because they usually rampage through uninhabited areas.

So who is Minnie Driver?

I've seen *The Five Thousand Fingers of Dr T* twice, and agree that it is very peculiar indeed. 'Camp' before they invented the concept. But it does have the image of that giant keyboard, and it's weird enough to merit rewatching. But I can say things like that, because I didn't see it when I was a kid. I was warped for life by watching *Hans Christian Andersen* at the age of five.

You say 'Is there a Stefan, or is he a product of a fascinating case of multiple personalities . . .?' Only Bill Wrights knows, and he isn't letting on.

Sorry, I had forgotten about sending you things Georgian. (Gillespie pins giant yellow post-it note to brow.)

Forrest Gump was saying a lot more than it seemed to be saying on its surface. And it *looks* so fabulous throughout, some of the best photography I've seen recently. But while I'm sure my feeling about it is true, I struggle to pin down where its cleverness lies. Let me see: the film's all about the difference between conventional stupidity and moral stupidity. Forrest himself is the mirror whose image shows up the moral stupidity in others, but this works because he never sees himself as anything but an ordinary bloke leading a slightly odd life. In 'real life', who most closely matches Forrest Gump? Not some slightly dim innocent, but super-talent Art Garfunkel, who one day took off from New York and ran all over America for the two years. No wonder there's this strange feeling throughout the film that nothing in it is exaggerated; it really is a documentary.

Most of the computer places in Melbourne operate on very tight margins, often lowering margins, I suspect, by fiddling sales tax accounts. The margins are so low that the companies go out of business fairly regularly. Too bad if your machine is guaranteed for three years. By buying from the cheap places, as I did, I bought what proved to be a dud hard disk. All in all, I would have spent the same in actual equipment cost and time saved (including Richard's time) if I had bought my new system from Gateway, which on paper seems to be the most expensive deal.

If fannish life were more exciting in some other city than Melbourne, we'd all move there, wouldn't we?

John Newman: PING!

I had always imagined the horror-movie image of ECT until I heard a psychiatrist speaking about it on the ABC's *Health Report*. He said that psychiatrists privately agree that the gentlest, most sociably acceptable treatment, psychoanalysis, has the lowest cure rate, while the 'barbaric' treatment of ECT has, for reasons nobody understands, a remarkably high cure rate. Where it's still practised, of course. Best wishes to your father, and of course, to you and Jan.

'Fannish' on my spell checker comes out as 'finish', 'finch', 'Finnish', 'Phoenicia' or 'mannish'. 'Fannies' is a much better alternative.

Michael O'Brien: MODULE No. 129

When he was a medical student Frank Payne had the ambition to set up as 'Dr Payne from Gore Street'. (Gore Street is in Fitzroy.) He did become a Dr Payne, and he's now a fully qualified psychiatrist.

It's annoying is the way *The Age Green Guide* assumes that 3AW and 3LO are competing for listeners. The trouble is that both stations seem to make the same assumption. People like me who can't stand advertisements and fascist talk-show hosts would never listen to 3AW. Similarly, I can't imagine that 3AW listeners would ever try 3LO. The real competition is between the talk stations and the music stations. Skewing the figures is

the fact that the public radio stations can't afford to be surveyed. I should imagine that 3RRR has at least a 7 or 8 in the ratings, but we'll never know. When I'm not listening to 3LO, I listen to 3MBS or ABC-FM, but spend most of Saturday on 3RRR, which has Brian Wise's 'Off the Record', Paul Harris's 'Film Buffs' Forecast' and Denise's 'Twang' (alternative country music) for a total of six hours.

The Phantom does sit very oddly with *The Age's* other comic strips. Except for *For Better or Worse*, they all seem creaky, with much the same jokes repeated since the early 1970s, when *The Age* dropped its former strips and brought in *Bristow*, *Tumbleweeds* and *The Wizard of Id*.

Jeanne Mealy: LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

You suggest getting down on the carpet and seeing things from the viewpoint of one's cats. Sophie is convinced that I do this when I do my exercises. She joins in as well, so there are the two of us wiggling our legs in the air. Sophie is tubbier than me, and she's doing it for fun, whereas I'm doing it for the *exercise*.

Quite a few people we know could write the Fan's Guide to Dumps after searching for a house to rent or buy. Lucy and Julian could probably compile the most complete list of what to avoid in inner-city housing in Melbourne, whereas other people we know have found the right house almost immediately.

Elaine's mother had a cat that once tried to commit suicide by sitting on a hot stove. Every cat would commit pleasure-suicide by heat vent if given the opportunity.

Why did I forego anaesthesia for the colonoscopy? Because it wasn't offered! It was a very odd feeling, very uncomfortable, but not painful. As I say, the worst part was finding a non-messy way to get home. Very weird experience, which I'm not keen to experience again. Since my father died of bowel cancer, my doctor suggests I should have a colonoscopy every two or three years.

You can have that windchill factor of -115° all on your own. It's cold enough here on a July day with nominal air temperature of 45 (of your degrees) and a brisk 30 kph southerly gale roaring down Smith Street. That must take our windchill factor close to 32°F (0°C), which is cold enough for me.

Cheryl Morgan & Kevin Standlee:

SCRATCHING POST No. 7

I, of course, do not feel free to comment on any aspect of the running of Aussiecon III. However, I can make one observation: before I gained access to Internet, I had very little sense of what was happening with Aussiecon. After I gained access, I found on Aussiecon III's Web page that much of the basic organisation is well established. It's the Convention's assumption that other people have access to e-mail (i.e. a common, mistaken assumption in fandom) that's disturbing. My general thought, which stretches way beyond Aussiecon matters, is: most of the people most fans want to contact for any purpose do not have access to e-mail. Perhaps fandom has a higher percentage of e-correspondents than any other section of the population, but this observation still applies.

I suspect that Canadian law required Canadian to

include the French version of '52nd World Science Fiction Convention' in its title.

My personal fear of a GST is the vast amount of added paperwork and expense it will add to our very small business. We will have to charge GST on all our invoices, probably losing us a lot of potential work, and we will be charged sales tax for the first time, since as a business dealing with book publishing, we pay no sales tax, even on computer equipment. And, like everybody else, suddenly we will be paying 10 per cent (or whatever) more on all our essentials, since it's obvious that the Australian GST will have no exceptions. Say no to GST. Instead, we should install a decent level of protective tariffs, plus a genuinely progressive form of income tax, and get rid of indirect taxes on products produced inside Australia.

The chaos in public transport you describe is exactly what Dingbat Kennett now wants to impose on Melbourne. The only good government is one that tries all possible means to stop people using private motor vehicles. Instead we have the opposite.

Well, I do download *Emerald City* now, but I couldn't before I had access to the Internet. Also, I hate reading anything on screen, even e-mail messages. I scan them quickly, then print them out. What will still be around in thirty or forty years' time? Only print fanzines and fanzines that have been printed out from Web sources.

My main objection to Web fanzines is on aesthetic grounds, but that's mainly because of the current lack of flexibility of Web browsers and the unlikelihood that whatever I have on my machine is likely to match whatever you have on yours, whatever that is. Hence you might produce a pretty publication but there's only half a chance that I can print out an equally pretty publication. I suppose this difficulty will disappear eventually. My own preference would be to produce and receive electronic fanzines in an RTF or DOC format, but I've already had somebody send me a DOC file from a Mac. You guessed it; nothing but a squiggle of numbers. I refuse to install Adobe Acrobat to produce and run PDF documents, since Adobe products usually stuff up the way my computer communicates with my printer. At the moment HTML is a mystery to me, but somewhere there must be a book that explains it all to me while assuming that I know *nothing* beforehand.

Sally Yeoland: LE CHAT PARTI No. 33

Thanks for the memorial to John's father. Like you, we met him only twice. I suppose we went to the funeral as some sort of gesture of solidarity with people we've known for anything up to 30 years (in my case) in what has been, for them in particular, a truly appalling year. The service reminded me a lot of the rather uplifting occasions I find at Church of Christ funeral services; most people really do believe that the service is a send-off to another life, not a conclusion of life. The two eulogies were highly informative; apart from anything else, the story of J. C. Foyster included an essential part of the history of the formation of the Uniting Church of Australia. John has sent me a copy of his talk.

You showed me yours, so I'll show you mine. Our Favourite Film Lists for 1997, of course. I see that you list films that you have seen already, whereas I don't,

unless a rather different version has been released during a particular year. Of your list I've seen the 1940s Robert Stevenson/Orson Welles *Jane Eyre*, which I suspect is not the one you've listed (5 for the old one); *The Party* (perhaps only 4, but I can't stop watching it if I happen to catch it halfway through when it's on TV); *In the Name of the Father* (5, especially for introducing me to the acting skill of Peter Postlethwaite); and *The Blues Brothers* (perhaps only 4, but it's one of the few films I can watch over and over again). Not much overlap.

I've seen little TV, except for as many episodes of *Dalziel and Pascoe* as possible. The new episodes of *Inspector Wexford* were made in a new, ultramelodramatic style that made me switch off.

Thanks very much for *Jardin Chat No. 1*. Entertaining, although I have no interest in gardens.

Francis Durbridge, who died a few weeks ago, was most famous for the *Paul Temple* radio serial, which ran in Britain and Australia from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Radio National re-ran quite a few episodes in the late 1980s, but by then the plots showed their creakiness. In reading the obituary, I was surprised to find that Durbridge wrote much else for radio, published quite a few novels, and wrote one major series every two years for television until recently.

Cats don't need catnip to look dopey but happy.

Okay, I'll try Magnums again. They seemed to change a few years ago, and became less creamy and chocolaty than Heavens. I shouldn't be eating either of them, or even admit that I've ever eaten them. I get a long-term bad reaction to cream and milk, but none to ice cream, which suggests that modern ice cream has very little milk in it.

I haven't had another cold since I discovered lemon drinks. A lemon drink on smoggy mornings can have a powerful antihistamine effect, but during the last six months I've found that it's become less effective.

Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP Feb 98

Another thrill-packed issue! With another fabulous Jenssen cover! If I don't do justice to it, Bill, you will just have to forgive me — I do have to finish these mailing comments in order to make the deadline.

It's not much use making comments to Stefan, since he isn't a member of the apa, and hence won't be able to read them. Still, I can't help but wonder why he isn't sending his columns in to *The Age*. They desperately need a good funny writer. 'Stefan the Social Animal at Christmas', 'Helpful Hints' etc. are not only the sort of writing that has almost disappeared from the press, but they are also of the type of fannish humour that has almost disappeared from fanzines. Send out more copies of your fanzine, Bill, or persuade Stefan to become a fanzine publisher.

Your observations on privatised public transport, Bill, will be proved quite correct in the near future. The destruction of Melbourne goes on relentlessly. Who will rescue us? Surely not Brumby and the Show Ponies? Where is the Good Party (the one we would vote for if it existed) when we need it?

Since I don't have a clue how to write macros, not one word of this 'elegant word macro' makes sense to me, Bill. Kindly enlighten me on what one is actually

doing when one writes macros in Word.

Thanks for the tip on setting up a Contents page in Word. Now all I have to do is figure out how to do the same in Ventura.

Thanks for all those facts about ice cream. Excuse me while I dash out to the nearest shop for a Heaven or a Magnum. Since the nearest shop is merely a service station takeaway, it doesn't have cone ice cream.

I agree. If your brother John is struck down by the dreaded heart disease, what hope is there for the rest of us? I'm tubby and eat all the wrong things (as well as lots of the right things) and I don't go on walks because I haven't done enough work for the day. The Grim Reaper is acomin', so I'd better finish writing this fanzine.

I do keep waiting for someone (possibly William Wright) to draw up a Draft Peace Treaty with the United Tribes of Australia. If Japan and Germany could lose a war and win the peace, perhaps the right kind of treaty could allow the United Tribes to do the same.

I have an uneasy feeling that the less positive aspects of the Bill Wright Future might come true. Unless the dire predictions of the George Turner Future (especially in *The Sea and Summer*, *The Destiny Makers* and *Genetic Soldier*) don't get us first. I'm betting on Turner, since some of his direst predictions have already started happening.

You're wrong, Bill. Take a look at Yarraville before you cast nasturtiums at Melbourne's West. Yarraville is more comfortable than Brunswick. Soon it will be trendier than Carlton. The developers have probably bought it all already.

I loved those one-liners, Bill. More, more.

I could probably become a truly great writer if only I could manage your trick, Bill: let the words 'come bubbling out of the subconscious without censure from the Will or Memory'. Thanks for this description of your working method.

Thanks for the complete explanation of the 'young lady . . . executed' statement. *The Age* hinted at the time that this was the real situation, but did not give details.

To be a Prophet, I would need to be Calm, Good, Wise and Sanctimonious. Having never shown any of these qualities, except occasionally the last, I don't think I'd be good at propheteering. But I'll keep switching off my brain from time to time to see what happens.

Thanks for reminding me of *Telepathist*, Bill. I must see whether I still have it in the collection. I bought it in 1969 when it appeared in paperback, but I suspect that I never quite found time to read it. Brunner did so much careless work that people now forget how brilliant he could be. 'The Last Lonely Man' and 'The Totally Rich' are among my candidates for the Top 50 SF stories of all time.

Elaine Cochrane: FUDGE FACTOR No. 1

All these years I've been providing the Official Guided Tour of the Cochrane-Gillespie Household, and now all my lies, half-lies and half-truths will be found out! I must admit I thought you would never be suckered into apa writing, Elaine, but *The Secret Garden* proved me wrong. Can FAPA be far behind?

Thanks for speaking for both of us about TC. I find

it hard to write about TC. I didn't like him for many years, but in his last years he proved to be a Great Hero of Catdom.

I've no real objections to Latinisms; the names of plants mean as little to me in plain English as they do in Latin.

Love those fractals, especially in black and white. I can't persuade Dick that I really do like the products of his programs better in black and white than in colour.

Lyn McConchie: FANATIC No. 61

It's heartwarming to read that somebody, somewhere, had a good year in 1997! Allow me to savour with you the delicious pleasure of taking that award out of its packaging. Perhaps if I'm a good boy and eat all my greens and publish millions of fanzines, one day somebody will send me an award like that (preferably a silver rocket ship). Better still, perhaps I could sell a story or three in the good old USA and watch the exchange rate multiply the cheque for American dollars into many, many Australian dollars.

But then you say you don't yet have a satisfactory explanation for the pain in your back. Health problems rule in this apa.

David Grigg: MEGATHERIUMS FOR BREAKFAST No. 14

Was I supposed to ring you or were you supposed to ring me when you and Sue moved to just across the river? Of course I've meant to ring every week since January. Seems we've all been too busy.

Your list of must-have books is hardly mine, although I'm glad I've bought as many Diana Wynne Jones books as I can find. Since I rarely re-read books, my Must Have For the Next Three Years books would amount to only a few hundred, as I'm a slow reader. Also, during the designated three years I would be adding the new books by favourite writers, such as Ruth Rendell and Anne Tyler. Many of my science fiction books stay in the current collection because they are almost the only books of fiction I need for reference — for Nova Mob talks; for fanzine articles; for people who are desperately trying to track down that story by that author; etc.

Thanks for my second copy of *Halfway House*. At least I've lived long enough to find that tuckerisation turn into reality — I've finally turned into Old Man Gillespie. Pass the rejuvenation potion.

Michael Green: REALITY MODULE No. 2

All I can say about Part 1 of 'Future Imperfect' is that I agree with you completely, and that's what I would say if I could be bothered writing a full-length essay about my view of society, government, economics and the whole damn thing. Probably a majority of people believe much the same, but we don't seem to be able to do anything about the lunatic path being taken by current governments, because each of the major parties believes in the same idiotic notions. No choice, no democracy. Dystopia has arrived, if for no other reason than Australian voters, who believe they have democracy, will not consider voting for a third force that renounces the assumptions of the other two parties.

So what we need is an essay on how we can change the current direction of society, since we already know

what's wrong. If you can provide the how-to kit, you'll get my vote, Michael.

Marc Ortlieb: ENERGY No. 179

You do go to a lot of trouble to get rid of Macs. Surely Paul Ewins has a spare garage somewhere? Or could you set up your own Vintage Mac Swap Meet in some moderately large town hall?

Janice Murray: THE SEATTLEITE

Thanks for visiting us. Hope we'll see you here again next time, i.e. September 1999. I hope that you can

persuade lots of American fans to join ANZAPA, then stand for DUFF. If they can take the excitement, of course.

Congratulations on the new job. I've received compliments from the new client for which I've done two jobs recently, but not yet a deluge of work. The trouble is (as always, these days) I'm a mere humanities editor, whereas most textbooks being put out by most educational publishers are maths/science books.

I hope you've persuaded Art Widner to join ANZAPA. He's one of our favourite DUFF winners.

MAILING No. 181, APRIL 1998



David Russell reading his copy of *Warhoon* 28.

Lyn McConchie: FANATIC 62

The main connection between Australian politicians and animals is the (un)fortunate propensity for polities to get pissed on by cute 'n' cuddly koalas. Great photo opportunity; pity about the drycleaning bills.

Thanks for the story of Rastus: the best ANZAPA cat story for awhile, and oddly cheering for a cat-demise story. I hope somebody mourned the humans as well.

Marc Ortlieb: MY PINK HALF OF THE DRAINPIPE No. 3

I republished my *Australian* obituary for George Turner right here in ANZAPA, but nobody seemed to notice.

Elaine didn't like Gleick's biography of Feynman because she says that Gleick fudged the explanations of Feynman's theoretical discoveries. They went straight over my head, I must admit. Elaine suspects that a better writer might have explained the ideas well enough so that even I could have understood them. (The oddest thing in Gleick's biography is leaving out the story of

Feynman's last project: his attempt to put together an expedition to visit Tuva in central Asia. The story of the expedition was the subject of a documentary film shown on TV.)

The story we've both read about the east bit of America disappearing during the California earthquake was in an *F&SF* of the mid-1960s. Probably I still have the magazine itself, but I can't remember the author or name of the story.

Gary published *The New Forerunner* regularly when he began it in the late 1960s. (My vague memory is that it was already going when I joined fandom in 1968.) Its publication schedule faltered in 1970, which is when John Foyster began *Norstrilian News*, which ran for about two years. Perhaps you can tell me who started the next fan newsletter: my feeling is that it was Leigh Edmonds with *Fanew Sletter*. As you say, Gary revived *The New Forerunner* for a few issues, but then Gary slowly gafiated.

I've never heard of Ken Russell's *In Search of the English Folk Song*. How could I have missed a Russell film?

Yes, but didn't John Antrobus write the play of *You'll Come to Love Your Sperm Test*? I've just looked up the film references, and they all say that *The Bed Sitting Room* was based on 'the play by Spike Milligan and John Antrobus', which suggests there was a play of that name. Were any ANZAPAns theatre-goers during the mid-1960s? Can anybody settle this one?

How is it possible for David Russell to be so consistently pleasant? By living in Warrnambool, a long way from other fans.

John Bangsund named George Turner's column for *ASFR* and *Scythrop* 'Plumbers of the Cosmos', and thought this hilariously funny without explaining the joke. Perhaps his meaning of 'plumber' included the one you mention.

'... two dead Guests of Honour'. Don't say things like that, you bastard!

Randal would forgive me if I mentioned his name as one of the two youngest members Aussiecon I Workshoppers, but the other person might not.

I've probably told you the story of Bernie Slattery, one of those many people I've met who might have been a fan but never was. When he was my immediate boss at VSTA (we were the editorial staff of *The Secondary Teacher* in 1977) he was still teaching half time. One day he told

me about a student teacher who rushed out of his class in tears. She couldn't keep the class quiet; she had lost control. 'I don't know why she was worried,' said Bernie, 'they do that to me all the time.' That's great Teacher Attitood; I wish I'd learned it before I bombed out of teaching at the end of 1970. Last I heard, Bernie was teaching at University High School and trying to get Justin to sell him some SF books.

Andrew Brown hardly ever spoke to me again after I expressed some disappointment in REM's *Murmur*, which is early in their career. I liked them more and more with each album, especially after they moved to the Sire label, but the REM trufans liked them less and less. I'm a sucker for pure pop, I guess, uncontaminated by grunge (unless it's Neil Young grunge, in which case it's still pure pop). *Out of Time* and *Automatic for the People* are as close to pure pop as you can get these days from a trendy group.

Jean Weber: JEANZINE No. 117

Only a person of great courage could contemplate not one but two house moves in one year. We don't have enough courage to contemplate another move in our lifetimes (livestime?).

Have you had the same trouble as a friend of ours who works on short-term contracts? Yes, the company loves his work, and yes, he can work for 70 hours a week if he likes, and charge by the hour, but when he sends in the invoice they don't actually want to process it and send him the cheque. Our friend has had to upgrade his skills at extracting money from accounts staff.

Michael O'Brien: MODULE No. 130

I assume you saw Tim Bowden's *Breaking the Ice* when it was on ABC-TV? We enjoyed the series so much that we now have it on video. Tim doesn't hide any of the difficulties of living on Antarctica, but he also makes it sound intriguing. Nerida, who co-owns a printing firm down Keele Street, spent a year living at Macquarie Island and a year at Casey on the Antarctic continent; I just wish I could persuade her to write down her adventures or give them as a talk to our local Neighbourhood Watch meeting.

You ain't kidding with your 'You know you're over 40 . . .' My first suit bought with my own income cost £17 (\$34). My most recent pair of shoes cost \$260.

The Age ran a completely sympathetic piece on science fiction on Sunday, 17 May: Jane Sullivan's 'Turning Pages' column. Sullivan even got the facts about George Turner right (obviously read Judy Buckrich's obituary for *The Age*), which is more than can be said for the person who interviewed Michael Jordan the Thursday before.

Eric Lindsay: KINGDOM OF THE BLAND

Thanks for the all that detail about recovering from a heart attack. Sounds as if you are, right now, immoderately fitter than I've ever been or ever will be.

'The Bruce protocol'? Great name for a fanzine.

Great stuff about Australian sales taxes. You are so right: most of them were originally targeted to be progressive taxes on luxuries. However, a lot of luxuries become necessities after a particular tax is set; the



Marc Ortlieb and Andrew Brown in 1980. (Photo: Cath Ortlieb.)

regime is not updated often enough. The GST is being pushed because Peter Costello wants to be able to buy his BMW more cheaply, and he wants us to pay for it by paying taxes on food.

That's the first time I've heard it said that the GST could be knocked out in the courts, and how it might be done.

Alan Stewart: SCANDIUM 1

Thanks for the Medical News Alert. 'A torch below the lump' — you know how to make a bloke feel uncomfortable. It must be a very odd feeling when the doctors tell you that an ultrasound can't find your left kidney.

I can hardly wait for that Stewart/Gunn article on semen deposition experiences. With luck you could sell it to *The Age's* weekend magazine — with photos.

As for the rest: the initial diagnosis was pretty scary when you told it to us on New Year's Eve, and we're just pleased that all that medical mucking around (and two general anaesthetics) paid off.

Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP Apr 98

That's my favourite of Dick's covers for *IRS* so far. But I know there will be more . . . many more.

You have a wild and weird life, Bill. I've only twice ever stayed up for a whole night, and neither time did I win \$350. But then, I don't know how to run a computer footy-tipping competition.

Best line of the mailing is Stefan's 'I was only away

for four weeks, but it felt like I was away for a month.' I know just how he feels.

Boiling on hills was what happened to my father's Morris Oxford every time we went for a long expedition into the Victorian countryside. No wonder I developed an extreme aversion to cars and family trips.

In 1960 we had a similar experience to Stefan's when the muffler went on the same ever-accursed Morris Oxford (PW-540; I still remember the number) one weekend when we were on holiday in Geelong. My father and mother insisted on attending church. On a totally quiet Sunday morning in 1960, the family Gillespie, dressed in our Sunday best, made a fair imitation of a tractor down the main street of Geelong.

What 'mystical "Journey: Inside to Outside"' are you talking about, Bill? Sometimes your writing is baffling.

Thanks for Stefan's reminder that it's best for Victorians not to admit to being Victorian when travelling in South Australia. Although surely there is a new sense of truce between the States after last year's Grand Final?

I have never been able to make sense of Excel, and as I've said before in this issue, I know nothing about macros, so pp. 9–10 are useless to me.

The ticket machine fiasco has become so amazingly, brilliantly incompetent that not even Stefan can exaggerate its peculiarities.

That's not a bad line, Bill: 'Never before in the history of humankind has man been so compassionate yet so totally unhelpful.' I should adopt it as a Meaningful Personal Goal.

I wish you had published your two pages on ECT.

Your fan history is incorrect, Bill. As I remember the origins of the Gelati part of Gelaticon, Merv and Paul were just about to embark on a panel about SF films when Lee Harding stuck his head through the door and said, 'There's a little man with a gelati van outside the door.' The combination of the desire to escape the upcoming panel and the desire for refreshment caused a world record in rate of evacuation of a large number of people from a small hall.

John Bangsund's speech, as Professor Humphrey Tape, was held that night, as well as a wonderful item in which the three 'SF widows', Diane Bangsund, Elizabeth Foyster and Carla Harding, had some fun at the expense of their then husbands and fandom in general. My friends Richard and Maureen drove me to John's place, probably to pick up the equipment he needed to deliver the speech. Since Rick and Reen would not be able to attend that night, John gave us a full dress rehearsal. Since much of the humour of the speech came from the sound effects, i.e. the run-off grooves of long-playing records, it is no longer possible to recreate the special quality of Professor Humphrey Tape's thesis, although the text is included in *Boys Own Fanzine* No. 4. (*BoF* 4 contains a complete transcription of Gelaticon, and therefore probably records *the precise moment* when Lee Harding stuck his head through the door and announced the arrival of the gelati van. If ever I find my copy of that giant fanzine, edited by John Foyster and Leigh Edmonds, I will verify all this.)

According to *The Macquarie Dictionary*, the meaning of 'quango' has shifted radically from its original meaning. As you say, it was 'qua(si) n(on)-g(overnmental)

o(rganisation)'. However, today it means 'qu(asi)-a(utonomous) n(ational) g(overnment) o(rganisation)', i.e. a government department set up by a government who does not want to be blamed for the actions of that organisation. A good example is the Post Office, which for most of its history was under the direct control of a government minister, the Postmaster-General. The trouble is that the Post Office was supposed to behave like a part of the Public Service and offer good service for low prices. The Postmaster-General, and hence the government of the day, was blamed every time the price of stamps went up or a letter was not delivered on time. Separated from the PMG and made into a quango in 1974, Australia Post immediately doubled its prices and began the long process of dismantling cross-subsidisation which, we are led to believe, will shortly lead to a privatised, highly expensive and totally useless organisation.

In 1972, when Lesleigh Luttrell, the first DUFF winner, was in town, Elizabeth Foyster (now Elizabeth Darling) drove us out to Monash University. On the way she pointed out the Dandenongs to Lesleigh and said, 'The experts say that by the year 2000 those hills will be completely destroyed.' Thanks to your brother George, this prediction did not come true, although perhaps by 2010 it will. At least he tried to save the Dandenongs, although the last time I rode on Puffing Billy, it was beginning to look as if the houses are taking over. Similarly, when our friends drove us out to Launching Place the other day, there were houses all the way, even along roads that on the map seem very rural.

Most recent conventions I've been to in Melbourne have been very well organised. Sniffy people such as Cheryl claimed that ARCon was not well organised, but few conventions have given me such enjoyment. The nostalgia in the air! (But no cigarette smoke.) The 1987 and 1990 national conventions held in Melbourne were superb, as was Constantinople in 1994. ANZAPACON was even more nostalgic and enjoyable than ARCon. There were times when Basicon felt a bit flat to me, but nobody could complain about the organisation of it. I was feeling a bit flat myself at the time. I just wish I could get to some Swancons, since they consistently score the best report cards in the fannish press.

Gerald Smith and Womble: RAMBLINGS No. 8

Womble is the hero of your fanzines, Gerald, although she never writes for them these days. I hope one day she writes her own story of the last few years of seeming disaster and amazing achievements.

Leanne Frahm: FROG OF FROG HALL No. 3

At last, the Tasmania trip report! And what a trip report. If I can persuade Elaine that collectively we have the money to visit Tasmania, we must go soon. We need to find out if there is any way to tour Tasmania by bus, since neither Elaine nor I drives. Perhaps we could have a perfect holiday by staying in Hobart for a week. If we felt rich or well organised we might have arranged such a holiday around Thylacon 2, but now it seems as if we won't be attending.

I want to go to Lake St Clair! Even if it does have tiger snakes on the paths. And Cradle Mountain National

Park! And Strawn! And Lonceston!

Sigh. 'Tracks Around Tassie' is the best article in ANZAPA for a long time. But I couldn't help being a bit worried about the extent of Louise's gambling habit.

How did you get some of those fabulous effects in Word, especially the birds'-feet border around your Tassie text? I'm sure I could find such things if I explored, but I'm always in such a hurry to finish my fanzines that I never have time to find elegant effects.

John Newman: PING!

Thanks for the photos of your house. I won't bother you with pictures of our place, but eventually I'll run a picture that shows how splendid the garden's becoming, especially in the glowing late-autumn weather we've been having. After our little spot of renovating about ten years ago (one old stove, heater and chimney replaced by a new wall plus lots of shelves for books and records) we decided never to renovate again except for very specific purposes in very small corners of the house.

In 1973 when I was in America it seemed that the only real difference between American conventions and Australian conventions was the attitude of hotel staff. Many hotels offered free function rooms if a convention booked out most of a hotel, and most hotels block-booked for convention attendees, making it easy to hold all-night room parties. If the bars in American hotels are not as accessible as those in Britain, the restaurants are always open and ice and Coke machines always well stocked. Many Australian 'host' hotels appear to operate in trip-up mode. ('If we can find any way to make things more inconvenient for you, don't hesitate to ask; we'll oblige.')

Okay, John. My computer operates on DOS (basic operating system, and for WordStar) and Windows 95, Mk II (i.e. FAT16). Will my computer suffer from the millennium bug or not if I don't change to Windows 98 (which I desperately want to avoid, from what I hear about it)? If so, what can I do about it? Please answer the easy questions first; I promise not to commit suicide when I hear the verdict.

Sally Yeoland: LE CHAT PARTI No. 34

It's nearly thirty years since an announcement of the end of a marriage in ANZAPA. We've had plenty of stories of the breakups of non-marriage relationships, but nothing quite so grave as your announcement, Sally. And after 25 years! I don't know what to say, apart from what I've said in person.

Most of my memories of your marriage are happy, sometimes sublimely so: wonderful meals at a variety of

houses in Melbourne and Geelong; many years of Friday-night gatherings at Eastern Inn; tremendous support you and John have given to Elaine and me in times of trouble; inspiration throughout. But we also realise there have been problems for many years, usually involving money, that seemed insoluble to you and incomprehensible to us, culminating in your bankruptcy. As your marriage survived bankruptcy, we assumed you could go on forever together. Or perhaps your announcement is the actual fallout from the bankruptcy. I just hope we don't lose touch with either or both of you.

If you're looking for a new server, you could do much worse than ours, Sally, which is Mira. \$35 initially, and then you pay only for the time you use, provided you pay on credit card. Our first monthly bill was \$5, our second \$13.50.

Have you put the news of the sale of your spare fanzines on various fannish newsgroups yet? I meant to do this tonight for you on Timebinders, which is the group most likely to be interested. You seem to think Australian fans would be greatly interested in old Australian fanzines, but that's often not so. It's in America that the name of John Bangsund is best remembered, and it's American fans who are most likely to pay real money for the treasures you've unearthed. Meanwhile, of course, John, Marc, Irwin, Perry or others might have useful ideas on selling them.

Thanks for the report on our wonderful day in Geelong, even if it probably marks the last time we will see you together, or at least in Geelong.

Ice cream: at last, a cheerful topic. In the 1950s there was scoop ice cream; and family bricks, which came in vanilla, chocolate, strawberry or Neapolitan (all three). In 1954 Toppa released the first of the paddle-pop style of ice creams, plus icy poles. Sennitt's and Peters began their lines very soon after. The only remaining paddle-pop type of ice cream from that era is the Heart, although the Magnum and Heaven are a pretty standard design that has lasted since then. Bucket ice creams, such as Sara Lee, seem to have arrived later. Scoop ice creams remained available from milk bars, but milk bars have almost disappeared.

Cath Ortlieb: YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HOME WHEN YOU FIND A WOMBAT IN YOUR BED No. 56

Thanks, Cath, for taking the trouble. Like many people, I've been so overwhelmed by the tidal wave of shit that's being dumped on us by Kennett, Howard etc. that I feel that there's nothing I could do. Yet you keep on trying to make a difference.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

These are books read since the end of November 1997. The ratings are:

- ** Books highly recommended.
- * Books recommended.

☞ Books about which I have severe doubts.

** **TWINS by Chris Gregory**
(Penguin 0-14-025604-0; 1997; 272 pp.)

If you've read books by Gerald Murnane or by

students of his writing class, you might know what to expect from Chris Gregory, one of his successful students. Indescribable to those who are not in the know, this kind of writing tests anybody's definitions of 'modernism' or 'postmodernism'. These are stories that give the impression of being essays, with lots of documentary matter and asides. Conventional dialogue and characterisation are missing. Each story is really a very funny dialogue between the author and the reader, yet the events described are taken to be fiction. Yet often they are not; they are rearranged versions of events that the author claims to be part of his experience. This would all be very tedious if it were not for Chris Gregory's unfailing lightness of hand. His best story, 'Jackie Chan', about the odd events that happened when Jackie Chan was making a movie in Melbourne a few years ago, is really a prose poem in praise of Melbourne. 'Powerhouse' is, similarly, a prose poem in praise of a certain era in American music and one of its most obscure composers. I first met Chris Gregory at the home of Gerald and Catherine Murnane. When I met him again, his story 'Jackie Chan' was nominated for an Aurealis Award. Chris told me that his ex-girlfriend is living in the flat that George Turner lived in until five years ago; she keeps sending back mail sent to him. Surely there's a future Chris Gregory story in *that?*

** **INVITATION TO A FUNERAL** by Molly Brown
(Vista 0-575-60036-5; 1995; 288 pp.)

Since not one, but two people from Acnestis, my other apa, sent me a copy of this book, I thought I had better read it immediately. I liked it a lot, but I kept feeling that this really sounds too much like a twentieth-century book to be called a successful historical novel. It is, however, an intriguing mystery, and its main character stays in the memory long after the events of the story have faded.

** **BLACK ICE** by Lucy Sussex
(Hodder 0-7336-0456-0; 1997; 186 pp.)

This is a highly successful Young Adult novel. Syb's family moves into a house that makes them feel cold all the time. The family is breaking up; all sorts of strange things are happening the neighbourhood. At its heart this a haunted house novel, but it moves at such a breakneck speed that one ignores some of the more familiar elements of the genre.

** **WINDOWS** by D. G. Compton
(Berkeley Putnam 0-399-12378-4; 1979; 255 pp.)

Windows is the sequel to *The Continuous Katherine Mortenhoe*, which I read again in December. It's very much better than I remembered it — one of the best British SF novels of the seventies. The surprise was to find that *Windows* is just as good as *Katherine Mortenhoe*, if not better. The observer from the first novel, blinded by his own hand, tries to put his life together while a media contingent lays siege to his home. He and his wife escape to Italy, but find that the new venture is no escape. Compton's characters are vivid, but even more vivid is the atmosphere of the midsummer Italian villa, cut off by civil war from the rest of Europe, in which Rod and his family find themselves. Compton is the least appre-

ciated British SF writer; it would be wonderful to have his best novels back in print..

* **STANLEY KUBRICK: A BIOGRAPHY**
by John Baxter

(HarperCollins 0-00-255588-3; 1997; 399 pp.)

This is entertaining enough, but Baxter shows that he did not get anywhere near the subject of his biography. Kubrick, indeed, is the villain of the story. Also, one does not know whether or not to trust Baxter's information. On the three occasions when I could double-check his facts, I found they were wrong. I'm sure a lot of research went into this book, but it feels hastily written and offhand. But perhaps nobody will be able to write a better biography until long after Kubrick is dead.

☞ **MEN AGAINST THE STARS**
edited by Martin Greenberg

(Grayson & Grayson; 1951; 253 pp.)

I had vague ideas of catching up on Golden Age SF by reading an anthology that was produced during the era itself. Most of the stories here are so appalling that they would confirm several people from Acnestis in their prejudices against pre-1960s SF. Most of them are talkie pieces; eventually the main characters stop yakking to each other and finish the story. The only piece with any life in it is Robert Moore Williams' 'The Red Death of Mars', which doesn't get reprinted these days. Can this Martin Greenberg be the same bloke who still produces anthologies by the ton?

** **THE SUNKEN ROAD** by Garry Disher (Allen & Unwin 1-86448-074-2; 1996; 214 pp.)

This is a highly successful Australian novel that uses a technique I haven't seen before in mainstream fiction. Disher divides the novel into a large number of short stories. Each short story tells the same story, about the same characters, covering the same length of time (the lifetime of Anna Tolley and earlier generations of both sides of her family), about the same place (the countryside of mid-north South Australia), yet each story is sufficiently different that the whole narrative can only be told by page 213. If there were any justice, Disher would have won every literary award of last year. He didn't, of course.

* **UNDER WORLD** by Reginald Hill
(Grafton 0-586-20452-0; 1988; 351 pp.)

George Turner sent this to me, naming it as his favourite of the Dalziel and Pascoe novels, of which he had grown quite fond. Well, maybe. After seeing the TV series, I can appreciate the main characters and their style of humour. Up to a point, the situation is interesting. But the denouement is so fake that it makes you feel that this is just another damned detective novel. Which is a pity, since it's also sharply observed documentary writing about the hard-luck areas of the north of England.

** **THROUGH THE DOLL'S HOUSE DOOR**
by Jane Gardam

(Julia McCrae Books 0-86203-278-4; 1987; 121 pp.)

Through the Doll's House Door is ostensibly a children's book, but its tale of the conversations and travels of the characters who first met each other

inside a doll's house reminds me most of Russell Hoban's *The Mouse and His Child*; it reaches a realm of universal meaning.

** **DOCTOR FISCHER OF GENEVA, OR THE BOMB PARTY** by **Graham Greene**

(Simon & Schuster 0-671-25467-7; 1980; 156 pp.)

I bought this on a remainder table in the early eighties. I thought I had better try reading it before selling it. It did, after all, get terrible reviews when it first appeared. It is a novella rather than a novel; more like the best of Greene's better short stories than any of his novels. It is a fable about the rich man who likes to hold the ultimate in decadent parties. He lets his imagination rip, and the guests have to put up with his tricks. Until the last party, the Bomb Party. Brilliant story-telling, reminding us that Greene never tired of testing himself and trying new ideas in fiction.

** **MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL** by **John Berendt**

(Vintage 0-090952101-6; 1994; 388 pp.)

The critics haven't been kind to Clint Eastwood's film based on this non-fiction novel, but it's not quite clear whether they dislike it because it departs from the book or because it sticks to it. The book falls into two halves: the first half made up of very funny Southern Gothic humour, with Savannah depicted as being weirder than a William Faulkner town; and an unexpected slide in the second half into a courtroom/mystery story. Berendt's light but precise story-telling holds together the two halves, if only because we want to know what keeps Berendt in this town for eight years. By leaving himself out of the story, he makes himself into an intriguing central character. The film, of course, would have to show the narrator as just one of the folks, which might be its problem. The book is not officially a novel, but it reads like one. It's more engagingly weird than a Robert Lee Burke yarn.

** **THE PENGUIN BOOK OF MODERN FANTASY BY WOMEN**

edited by **A. Susan Williams and Richard Glyn Jones**
(Viking 0-670-85907-9; 1995; 560 pp.)

I don't usually buy 'the Penguin Book of' anything, but I thought I'd better buy this one, as it includes a story by Lucy Sussex. Lucy is the only Australian here, and is the youngest contributor. I didn't like her story, 'Kay and Phil', when I first read it, because I thought she was being snide about one character at the expense of other. Rereading the story, I like the way it shows two authors becoming so entangled in their own fictions that each can introduce the other into his or her world. It's a celebration of the act of fictionalising. The collection begins with Elizabeth Bowen's 'The Demon Lover' (1941), proceeds quickly into the 1950s, and finds its main source of good stories in the 1970s and 1980s. These people really know their genre SF and fantasy as well as the mainstream of short-story writing. P. D. James is here, with a deft future-detective story, 'Murder, 1986', but it is followed by James Tiptree Jr's 'The Milk of Paradise'. Daphne du Maurier's 'The Old Man', a classic stinger-in-

the-tail, might be expected in such a volume, but only people who know their stuff are going to dig up Joanna Russ's 'The Second Inquisition', which hit me like a brick through the front window. This is a very great story, which persuaded me to prepare a talk about Russ for a future meeting of the Nova Mob (and hence for here). The paperback of this book is around, although you might also still find the hardback.

** **THE BLOOD KISS** by **Dennis Etchison**
(Scream/Press 0-910489-18-1; 1988; 216 pp.)

Surely you can only call a story a 'horror story' if it creeps up on you and deals you a blow when you least expect it? Try telling that to most horror writers, who signal every frisson with a chthonic eldritch moan. I knew that Dennis Etchison was a Writer to Watch because I read one of his first stories when it appeared in the 1970s. I had no idea that he could be *this* good. There is nothing predictable here, except in the very early pieces. By the end of the seventies Etchison was writing dank, subterranean, deeply twisted stories, some of which don't quite make sense, but are all the more horrifying for that. 'The Soft Wall' is the most disturbing story in this collection, but 'A Nice, Shady Place', 'The Woman in Black' and 'Deadspace' are also very strange. I just hope that eventually I can find some of the other Etchison collections.

* **THE DREAM YEARS** by **Lisa Goldstein**
(Bantam Spectra 0-553-25693-9; 1985; 195 pp.)

Several people have told me that this is the best of Lisa Goldstein's novels, but I was disappointed by it. I didn't really believe that these characters are French, or infused with the spirit of Dada and Surrealism. The time-slip situation is conventional, at least compared to the devices used in the two other Goldstein novels I've read, and the prose doesn't have that freshness one expects from this author.

** **THE SPARROW** by **Mary Doria Russell**
(Black Swan 0-522-99777-3; 1996; 506 pp.)

I've seen the US paperback of this book, and I wish I had bought it instead of the British paperback. In fact, I wish I had known about this book a year ago so I could buy the hardback. But it was left to the great Acnestis choir to sound the hallelujah. Since I read it, I've been alerting everybody else I know. There's not much I can say about *The Sparrow* that hasn't been said many times. Is it *about* religion? or poetry? or music? No, it's about people who can reach out to something beyond themselves. That this something might cruelly betray them does not denigrate the spirit of those who do the reaching. It is a book of funny and occasionally wise conversations. It is a book of vistas; it has a panoramic visual sense that is missing in most SF. It is a book that rides the flood of life itself.

☞ **THE HORSE YOU CAME IN** by **Martha Grimes**
(Alfred A. Knopf; 1993; 332 pp.)

** **HOTEL PARADISE** by **Martha Grimes**
(Alfred A. Knopf; 1996; 348 pp.)

How is it that these two novels, one appalling, one transcendent, were written by the same person? *The*

Horse You Came In is a botched giggly joke, an addendum to the corpus of Jury detective novels; a totally unnecessary book, with occasional vivid pages. *Hotel Paradise*, set in a remote part of southern USA, is one of the finest books about growing up that has ever been written. Its main character inhabits that strange zone that separates childhood and adolescence. She becomes obsessed by the death of a girl of her own age, a girl who died 40 years before. She helps her trouble-beset mother during summer at the Hotel Paradise, but the rest of the time she has free to investigate the death. In so doing, she makes friends with a wide variety of eccentrics, is befriended by a silent woman who might or might not be a ghost, and nearly, but not quite, solves the mystery. All without most of the adults in her life realising that she is involved in this search. Grimes's great strength is her precise sensuality; her world is that of low fogs, ripples on the lake, strange sights seen through trees. A great American novel.

** **THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER'S BOY**
by Barbara Vine

(Viking 0-670-87937-1; 1998; 343 pp.)

To 'Barbara Vine' (Ruth Rendell) every person is an alien to every other person, no matter to what extent we think we understand each other. In *The Chimney Sweeper's Boy* she pays tribute to Germaine Greer's *Daddy We Hardly Knew You*, my favourite non-fiction mystery story, then follows her own perverse path. The main character is dead for most of the novel. Who was he? What was his real name? Why did he cut himself off in the early 1950s from his original family? Why did he become a magnificent father and a poor husband? His wife and daughters investigate his story, uncovering level after level of obfuscation, while slowly working out that their father told his real story in his novels. But in the novel's first scene, the dying author had already handed his true autobiography to a man who had no idea what he had been given. Some reviewers have complained about the cleverness of this novel, ignoring the revealed pain in the life of the wife, whose story this really is, and the magnitude of the epiphany in the book's last pages. I don't know how Vine/Rendell maintains the standard of her writing for novel after novel (three novels a year at the moment), but I'm grateful for her energy and perception.

* **THE YEAR'S BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY, VOL. 2**

edited by Jonathan Strahan and Jeremy G. Byrne
(HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-5942-2; 1998; 443 pp.)

I'm disappointed to be disappointed by this volume, as Vol. I was magnificent. I guess the stories weren't there to be anthologised. I have no real favourites, since even the best stories are beset by hurried exposition or failed, patchy endings. Or perhaps I was grumpy on the days I read it. Stories

that are very good, but could be just a bit better, are Greg Egan's 'Reasons to be Cheerful', Terry Dowling's 'Jenny Come to Play' (my favourite in the book), 'Niagara Falling' (Janeen Webb and Jack Dann), 'Love and Mandarins' (Sean Williams), 'Merlusine' (Lucy Sussex), and 'Due West' (Rick Kennett). A theme of human monsters dominates several of these stories. I don't know whether Jodie Kewley's whimsical 'Nicholas Afalling' is very good, but oddly it remains with me as the most memorable story in the book.

* **KISSING THE BEEHIVE** by Jonathan Carroll
(Doubleday 0-385-48011-3; 1998; 232 pp.)

Carroll's previous novel, *From the Teeth of Angels*, felt like a sign-off statement to the world, transcendent and despairing at the same time. It's been a few years between that novel and *Kissing the Beehive*, which is the most disappointing Jonathan Carroll novel so far. It's about a writer with writer's block, who breaks it by travelling back to his home town. Autobiographical, perhaps? If so, inspiration failed to strike. All the familiar surprise elements of a Carroll novel are here, but they now feel sterile and unsurprising.

And now for some novels and novellas that I can't talk about, or even rate. They are contenders for the Young Adults section of this year's Aurealis Award. I'll list them now, and talk about them after the awards are announced next year.

SWEETWATER NIGHT by Alison Stewart
(Hodder Signature 0-7336-0570-2; 1998; 170 pp.)

KILLING DARCY by Melissa Lucashenko
(University of Queensland Press 0-7022-3041-3; 1998; 230 pp.)

COLD IRON by Sophie Masson
(Hodder 0-7336-0583-4; 1998; 185 pp.)

THE LYREBIRD'S TAIL by Sue Robinson
(Lothian 0-85091-883-9; 1998; 158 pp.)

THE GODDESS: AFTER DARK 25 by Robin Klein and Anne Sudvilas
(Lothian 0-85091-894-4; 1998; 48 pp.)

THE CARNIVAL VIRUS: AFTER DARK 26 by Sue Robinson and Peter Gouldthorpe
(Lothian 0-85091-900-2; 1998; 48 pp.)

FANTASTIC WORLDS edited by Paul Collins
(HarperCollins Moonstone 0-7322-5878-2; 1998; 316 pp.)

THE PLAYGROUND: AFTER DARK 28 by Shaun Tan
(Lothian 0-85091-898-7; 1998; 48 pp.)

THE GHOST OF DEADMAN'S BEACH: AFTER DARK 27 by Venera Armanno and Dominique Falla
(Lothian 0-85091-897-9; 1998; 48 pp.)

A DARK WINTER: THE TENEBRAN TRILOGY, BOOK ONE by Dave Luckett
(Omnibus 1-86291-368-4; 1998; 328 pp.)

— Bruce Gillespie, 21 May 1998