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'Island', cover graphic by Ditmar, using Bryce 3D.

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**Happy 30th Anniversary to us!**  
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**Happy 30th Anniversary to ANZAPA!**  
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Did or did not Marc remember that October 1998 is the thirtieth anniversary of the first mailing of ANZAPA? I have a vague recollection that he did, but suggested we hold the anniversary collation party, one year late, at Aussiecon III. But raise a glass on 10 October 1998 as well — to us!

In line with this mood of celebration, I report that things have improved a bit since last issue's Gillespie-Cochrane Report.

Sort of.

Elaine has been suffering headaches regularly for the last six months or so. Extensive tests have revealed little (the default diagnosis is migraine), and tablets prescribed by the local GP have helped slightly. Meanwhile, Elaine has been busy with work on maths/scienc textbooks.

David Lake sent me the money to publish a double issue of *The Metaphysical Review* (No. 26/27). When I finished it, I found I had about 80 extra pages to publish at the same time. I borrowed a lot of money from Elaine to publish No. 28/29, but I've been able to pay back most of that money because of the posthumous kindness of George Turner. Cherry Weiner, his (and now my) American agent sold George's last finished novel, *Down There in Darkness*, to Dave Hartwell at Tor Books. The first payment came through just after I had published the two double issues of *TMR*. Because of the parlous state of the Australian dollar, the payment from New York virtually doubled in value by the time it reached my bank account.

I'm not sure what to do now, except catch up on mailing comments to ANZAPA and Acnestis. I don't have any paying work on the desk at the moment, although various contacts have made vague promises of work to come. I could finish *SF Commentary*, in the hope that I might have some money from somewhere to print and post it. I should prepare the manuscript of *The Best of George Turner's Non-Fiction*, which I had hoped to do last January. Should be fun, although George has left an enormous amount of material to sift through. (Please send me suggestions for Turner articles that must be included in this anthology. Lee Harding and Lucy Sussex have already suggested all or sections of *Off-Cuts*.) And I should try to rescue the many-years-delayed *Best of SF Commentary* from Liverpool University

Press, although I cannot get any response from Robin Bloxsidge at LUP.

As for other people . . . some are recovering satisfactorily from heart attacks or treatment for cancer, but Ian Gunn is still very ill. SF continues to lose its brightest and best. Robert A. W. Lowndes died about a month ago, and on Saturday I heard that Leigh Couch died last week. Best known as the mother of Lesleigh Luttrell, Chris Couch and Mike Couch, she was a very prominent fan in St Louis during the 1960s, but gradually withdrew from fandom during the 1970s. (Her son Mike died in the early eighties, and her husband Norbert not long after.) Leigh, Norbert and Mike put me up in St Louis in 1973; they were wonderful people.

I've been more caught up on the Internet than I had planned, by becoming a subscriber to the Timebinders listserver. (I still don't know the difference between a listserver and a newsgroup, but I like the way Timebinders does things.) It's enabled me to get in touch with people I haven't talked with for many years, made me some new friends, and given me a way of reminding Americans that Norstrilia Press still has Greg Egan's first novel for sale.

But the cost of staying on Timebinders is high: 100 messages a day, an average of an hour and a half to scan and reply to.

Is it worth it? Being part of an electronic apa prompts me to write too much far too quickly, and I was already writing a fair bit here and in Acnestis. Timebinders members include people such as Bill Donaho and Ted White, who tell the scurrilous stories that didn't make it into Harry Warner's fan histories. Timebinders people don't discuss books much, although Denny Lien works in a library and can access the bibliographic knowledge of the entire world in order to answer a one-line query. Timebinders is an addiction: either I keep up or drop out. Lots of valuable correspondents have dropped out; 100 messages a day is just too daunting. I'll stay for the time being.

Meanwhile, I've been missing apa writing. To show that I'm still around, here is a grab bag of the few articles I've written recently.

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# ‘THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD I WILL NOT SEE’: THE GEORGE TURNER MEMORIAL LECTURE 1998

Delivered by Bruce Gillespie on Friday, 4 September 1998  
at the Melbourne Science Fiction Club,  
74 Melville Road, West Brunswick, Victoria.

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## *Introduction:*

If it were not for the inconvenient fact that I went to his funeral, I would say that George is still alive and controlling my life.

Bev Hope, who is arranging the discussion program for the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, told me some time ago about a planned series of George Turner Memorial Lectures, to be held once a year at a Friday night meeting of the Club. The first lecture would be given by Dr Richard Slaughter, who runs a Futures Program at Melbourne University, and with whom George Turner kept in contact during the last few years of his life. George gave a few talks to the Futures Program, and his *The Sea and Summer* was its central text.

I was looking forward to Slaughter’s talk, although because of problems of reaching the Clubrooms by public transport I don’t usually attend meetings. On Friday, 28 August, Bev told me that Slaughter was overseas, and could I give the George Turner Memorial Lecture the following Friday?

My first instinct was to wing it — spend half an hour or so nattering about George and his influence on my life. It wouldn’t be hard. But . . . I am not a public speaker by inclination or ability. I’ve made an embarrassing mess of good material on several occasions because I’ve relied on notes instead of writing out a lecture properly. Bev particularly wanted me to talk about the connection between George and futurology. Two days before the Lecture I sat down at the keyboard, and two hours later I had 3000 words sitting on disk. I find it easier to write about George than any other topic. On Friday, 4 September, I gave the lecture, to an audience of about thirty kind souls. Here it is:

During the last twenty years of his life George Turner developed an increasingly urgent interest in the actual future of humanity, in what will happen to the world during the early years of next century — that is, during the years he knew he would not live to see. George said it best in the following two paragraphs of one of his most important books, *In the Heart or in the Head*, published in 1984:

Do I really care that this science fiction, which I find myself damning heartily for its shortcomings, could play a useful role in the society it feeds with dreams? It is, after all, only one possibility among many, and at sixty-seven [George’s age when he wrote these words] I can be fairly certain of escaping the force of the coming storm. Why should I care?

With or without reason I do care for the future, enough to be frightened for it. After an egocentric, selfish lifetime I find, to my surprise, that I care very much what may be the shape of the world I will not see.

You would expect that a writer of science fiction would

be concerned with the future, which is, after all, the subject matter of the field. Indeed, more than any other SF writer George regarded science fiction as a realistic literature that happened to be set in the future. But it took him a long time to face up to the future and become interested in it for its own sake.

In coming years it might be difficult to remind SF critics, readers and writers of the enormous influence that George Turner has had on the growth of Australian science fiction since 1966. A short man, he stood ramrod straight, and smiled little. Until a few years before his death, he had a booming voice that dominated an audience. His manner in public reminded me of an Old Testament prophet. His wide-ranging pronouncements stirred audiences to something like discomfort, but George was never as disliked as he claimed he wanted to be. His aim was always to make people think for themselves and examine their own assumptions.

When George Turner met John Bangsund, he was a well-known literary writer in Australia, and had won a Miles Franklin Award for *The Cupboard Under the Stairs*. Although he had been reading science fiction all his life, and had even published a reader’s letter in an American magazine in 1932, he had never written science fiction or about it. However, he must have talked about the subject with Bob Sessions, his publisher at Cassell, for in 1966 Sessions introduced him to John Bangsund, the editor of *Australian Science Fiction Review*. The friendship was immediate and productive. George had hidden his interest in science fiction, knowing well how Australian literary people scorned even the mention of it. A fundamentally lonely man, he found through *ASFR* an appreciative audience for ideas he had been developing throughout his life.

George’s first essay for *ASFR*, ostensibly a hatchet job on Alfred Bester’s *The Demolished Man*, was a clarion call to science fiction writers to lift their game and become the sort of writers they were always claiming to be. George never changed his tune, although he rang variations on it.

During the 1960s George’s most elaborate expression of his thoughts was the long essay called ‘On Writing About Science Fiction’ (*ASFR* 18, December 1968). His argument was that science fiction itself could never improve until the reviewing and criticism of it improved. When *Australian Science Fiction Review* began in July 1966, SF criticism was at a pretty low ebb. The only reviews available were the plodding pieces in the SF magazines — usually little more than descriptions of the plots of new books. Only Algis Budrys in *Galaxy* wrote well, but his approach smacked of the same breathless boosterism that George was to make fun of throughout his reviewing years. My own reaction to the first few issues of *ASFR*, long before George appeared on the scene, was: ‘So there *are* intelligent people who write about science fiction.’

The other problem of the period was that there was no

professional reviewing outside the SF magazines. To read intelligent reviews you had to track down the serious fanzines. Except in *ASFR* and a few overseas fanzines, such as *Warhoon*, *Lighthouse* and *Zenith*, the standard of the reviews in fanzines was very low.

George Turner set out to put everybody right. The most unnerving aspect of George, after all, was his belief in the correctness of his own point of view and his unwillingness to yield points to anyone. This he saw as the only way to generate ideas in the field.

I've always found it hard to sum up George's actual approach to science fiction. On the one hand he would say, over and over, that there should be no double standard in science fiction: that any short story or novel in the field should be judged on exactly the same basis as any other piece of literature. Here George stood on firmer ground than his opponents, because since the 1930s George had read everything: general literature, thrillers, mysteries, science fiction and a wide range of non-fiction. He read every important novel that was released in Australia, and continued to do so until his death.

On the other hand, George was always far more convincing when he was writing about individual works than he was when delivering general statements about the whole SF field. He looked very carefully at what a writer was trying to do *and* how well it was done. He disliked fantasy, but if he had to review a fantasy novel, he would not dismiss it out of hand. He would assume that the writer had a serious intention until the book proved otherwise, and would try to show how well or poorly that author accomplished his or her aims. He was more vehement about science fiction books, because he expected the author to have thought seriously about the ideas that formed the basis of the book.

So there was always a conflict between what George said he was looking for in an SF book and what he actually found there. He did expect other reviewers to be aware of these distinctions, and to practise their own craft as best they could. Which is what he wrote about in the essay 'On Writing About Science Fiction'. (Thanks to the generosity of Bill Wright, this issue can be found in the Wright Collection of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club.) When the essay appeared, Harry Warner Jr, still a constant letter writer to *Ethel the Aardvark* and many other fanzines, said that it should be reprinted every year.

Many of us tried to persuade George to allow such a reprint. I asked him quite a few times, without success. He said that his thinking had moved on from there, but in fact he stuck to its tenets in all his own reviewing.

In answer to my requests, he eventually wrote a revised, much longer version for the Melbourne University SF Association's magazine *Yggdrasil*, which I was typing at the time. Titled rather awkwardly 'And Finally, Not Taking It All Too Seriously', it appeared in episodes during 1977 and 1978. It was overlong, added little to the ideas of the original, and didn't have the punch that readers had come to expect from George's criticism. George had begun to write his own science fiction novels, beginning with *Beloved Son*, and was getting sick of reviewing and criticism. He abandoned the long version eventually, and it has never been reprinted.

But I did keep pestering George to reprint 'On Writing About Science Fiction'. In the early 1980s this prompted him to try something far more ambitious, which became the book-length *In the Heart or in the Head*, a strange mixture of genres which George subtitled 'An Essay in Time Travel'. Every chapter of autobiography alternates with a chapter of the history of science fiction. Connecting the chapters is

George's assumption that what you read is essential to the shape your life takes. After all, he had begun reading science fiction very early in his life. A major theme of *In the Heart or in the Head* is George's extreme isolation from other human beings at various periods of his life, which conflicted with his lifetime ambition to become a writer. The need to make a connection between one's reading and the events of ordinary life is something that raises difficulties for people who are interested in science fiction. Is this stuff we read an escape from what is laughingly called 'real life', or is it somehow a much grander, truer shape of life itself?

Somewhat to his own surprise, after he had finished *In the Heart or in the Head*, George found himself writing a new long last chapter. In this chapter, called 'For Those in Peril . . .', he found himself working away at ideas he had not tackled before. That's the chapter from which I quoted at the beginning of this talk.

His thoughts began with a stray comment in 1983 by newly elected Prime Minister Robert Hawke:

On the night of 20 May 1983 I heard Prime Minister Robert Hawke speak of the future of employment and recommend that people seek new ways of applying their abilities and energies; he mentioned, specifically, cottage industries, with something of the air of a man grateful for any suggestion to throw into a yawning gap. Then I knew that science fiction had hit our Prime Minister squarely between the eyes, whether he reads it or not, because he was thinking like a science fiction writer taking a worried sight on the dangerous, amorphous future and at first finding only the obvious.

It is sobering to realise that fifteen years later much of the political rhetoric about employment and industry is still the sort of growth-equals-jobs talk that Hawke was trying to update, however temporarily, in 1983. The shape of the future has become much more amorphous and dangerous than it was in 1983, but nobody now seems capable of science-fictional thinking about the situation. In *In the Heart or in the Head* George mentions the early 1980s' best guess that by the year 2000 only 3 per cent of us would be employed. Two years short of this target, was the prediction wrong? Are employment figures being sustained artificially, or are processes going on that George could not have guessed at in 1983?

The question George set himself in *In the Heart or in the Head* was: if science fiction writers really thought hard about the future, what would a really good novel about the future be like? Since George believed that such a novel had not been written, he felt it necessary to try writing it.

Most of the last chapter of *In the Heart or in the Head* is devoted to the many ways in which SF writers currently talk about the future, and why these methods are inadequate. He quotes, twice, T. S. Eliot's statement: 'It is not enough to understand what we ought to be, unless we know what we are.' Most SF writers, according to George's accounts, jump ahead to a far future and merely describe it. No matter how simple or complex they make it, they give little idea of how we got from here to there. Worse, they take no responsibility for their ideas, which become merely skeletons on which to hang a tale. In the pages with which I found myself disagreeing vehemently at the time, George makes a strong case for science fiction being preachy, or at least carrying strong messages that actually make us think about the future.

George takes a number of SF ideas, throws them up in the air, and watches them come down splat. He shows how

inaccurately SF writers predicted the future during the 1940s and 1950s, often because they concentrated on technological problems and technological solutions.

What solutions did SF offer for truly awesome problems, such as nuclear brinkmanship? 'The most common is the simply brazen cop-out,' writes George, 'wherein the story is set so far in the future that the whole matter is by then over and done with, lost in history.' Other SF 'solutions' include a One World State, wiping out regional and cultural enmities. George's first three SF novels, *Beloved Son*, *Vaneglorry* and *Yesterday's Men*, were aimed at sinking this idea. The third 'solution' was the non-solution offered in many SF novels of the fifties and sixties: that somehow enough people would survive a nuclear holocaust to begin rebuilding a society. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, by Walter Miller Jr, is the most famous example, with Edgar Pangborn's *Davy* a well-written but not completely convincing variation on the theme.

Another SF 'solution' mentioned by George was the 'force field' with which countries could protect themselves against nuclear attack. George called this an approach for 'fantasy buffs with fairy godmothers'. George hated anything in SF that smacked of wish-fulfilment or daydreaming.

George turns to the most urgent problem of the near future: the stripping of the world's resources because of overpopulation and the inability of the world right now to feed its population. Virtually all the solutions offered in SF 'smacked of the jackboots', says George, and indeed the possibilities he offers in his last four novels also depend on heavy-handed political forces. In three of his last four published novels, *The Sea and Summer*, *The Destiny Makers* and *Genetic Soldier*, he gives a lot of thought to the mechanics of the 'cull': a worldwide government-organised deliberate destruction of most of the world's people. In *Genetic Soldier* he carries the idea one step further, and shows how a virus capable of creating a new kind of low-reproductive humanity might be spread throughout the world, reducing its population permanently to a few millions.

George's first attempt to meet his own challenge and write about a tangible near future was the short story 'The Fittest', which appeared in an anthology *Urban Fantasies*, edited by David King and Russell Blackford. It tells of the slow running down of our society as the Greenhouse Effect kicks in and the waters of Port Phillip Bay begin to engulf the low-lying parts of Melbourne. It works because it is told in terms of four characters, is set in the place George knew best, Melbourne, and shows how small increments of change will destroy our current way of life much more effectively than sudden catastrophes.

In turn, George used 'The Fittest' as the seed of a novel called *The Sea and Summer*, which appeared in Britain in 1987. It won the Arthur Clarke Award, and came second in both the Commonwealth Writers Prize and the Campbell Memorial Award. Released in America in 1988 and re-named *Drowning Towers*, it began a profitable association between George and Avon Books in New York. During the last decade of his life, George published three more novels, *Brain Child*, *The Destiny Makers* and *Genetic Soldier*, all among his very best work, wrote another novel, *Down There in Darkness*, which will be published posthumously, and began

another novel, the first 20,000 words of which will be published in *Dreaming Down Under*, a huge anthology of Australian short fiction edited by Jack Dann and Janeen Webb.

Few writers, let alone SF writers, have their most fruitful years between the ages of seventy and eighty. Everything George had been considering during his whole life comes together in these late novels. He gives an outline of our possible future, which I suspect is far too optimistic. The total meltdown of the world's monetary system, which George places at about 2020, has been averted only narrowly several times during the last few years. The Greenhouse Effect is well underway, although it is still not clear whether this will lead to noticeable increases in sea level. And the dumbing down and unemployment of total populations, shown clearly in *The Sea and Summer*, has begun in earnest.

Yet if George had been merely right, or prophetic, would anybody read his books? His greatest literary talent, which makes him more interesting than virtually all other Australian writers of the last forty years, has always been his ability to tell a good yarn, and this talent is shown at its best in the novels I've just been mentioning. George always said that a good novel is based on 'character in action' — he gives his main characters a strenuous time of it. In form, his novels are usually thrillers or mysteries, and he had little time for the prettified 'good writing' that is so uninteresting in most Australian literary fiction.

George wrote his best work in his last decade, but much of the impetus for this best work was his rapidly increasing interest in the future as a thing in itself. He wrote for *21C* and newspapers about overpopulation. He spoke to clubs, societies and university groups.

Superficial readers throughout the last thirty years have regarded George as a gloomy writer, but he regarded himself as one of the most optimistic SF writers. That optimism is not based on whistling a happy tune, but his belief (which I've never much shared) that humanity is rational enough to work through the current horrific problems and find workable solutions. These solutions will give little comfort to any particular group in society, because the problems are mind-boggling, but he believed SF writers of talent could help in finding solutions that worked. Let George himself have the last word, again from *In the Heart or in the Head*:

Science fiction can play a small role [in considering the future] if ever it ceases to regard itself at one extreme as a set of rarefied exercises in philosophy, metaphysics or increasingly tired satire, or at the other, as mindless escapism. A middle course — consideration of change in terms of contemporary preparation and understanding — could direct attention to the realities of cultural evolution and revolution, where at present it peddles only dreams of success or nightmares of destruction.

Seek out George's books wherever they may be found, read them, then start thinking for yourself about the dangerous future that George will never see.

— Bruce Gillespie, 4 September 1998

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## NORSTRILIA PRESS: THE FANNISH WAY TO PUBLISH

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### *Introduction:*

**When I mentioned on Timebinders that Norstrilia Press still had for sale Greg Egan's first novel, *An Unusual Angle*, there was some interest (although nobody has actually sent money yet). Richard Newsome asked for a catalogue of Norstrilia Press publications, which seemed a pretty boring document to post for people who are interested in fannish history. Instead of sending a catalogue, I listed each of our publications in terms of the people who contributed to each book, and tried to capture the atmosphere of a time when rank amateurs such as Carey, Rob and me could keep a publishing company solvent for ten years. As Paul Simon wrote: 'A time of innocence, A time of confidences . . . I have a photograph. Preserve your memories.' Let's not overdo the nostalgia — Carey and Rob and I disagreed on most things most of the time — but we still like looking through those NP books sitting on the shelves.**

**The unheralded heroes of this story are Maggie Gerrand; Jo Handfield, whose husband eventually emptied the garage of all those boxes of books; and Elaine Cochrane, who had to endure Norstrilia Press board meetings in her own living room.**

One fateful day in the fateful year of 1975, I said to Carey Handfield that there must be a way to earn the money to produce *SF Commentary* regularly. (Certain patterns repeat themselves constantly in my life.) 'Sure,' said Carey. 'You put together a *Best of SF Commentary*. We'll publish it, and the profits will pay for regular issues of the magazine.'

Since we were both Cordwainer Smith fans, and liked the title *Norstrilian News* (John Foyster's newszine of the early seventies), we wrote to Linebarger's widow, and received permission to call ourselves Norstrilia Press. Irene Pagram, then partner of Lee Harding, designed our logo and the cover of our first book, *Philip K. Dick: Electric Shepherd*, which was edited by me, based on all the stuff on Dick that had appeared in *SFC* since Issue No. 1, January 1969. Roger Zelazny, who had made Australia's presentation at Torcon in 1973, wrote the Introduction. Carey raised the money to print it by soliciting 'investments' (long-term loans) from all the fans he knew, and found a printer who lived 100 miles away. Only Carey's persistence dragged copies of the book from the printer on the eve of Aussiecon I in August 1975. We printed 1000 copies.

No profits reached the constantly empty coffers of *SF Commentary* until well over ten years later, but Carey had found a hobby, a Mission In Life. He did 90 per cent of the work on Norstrilia Press for the next ten years.

Rob Gerrand joined the partnership six months later, originally because he invested a whole lot of money into the venture. He and Carey changed the direction of our publishing policy from the Shining Vision of Pure Criticism that I had envisioned. I wanted Norstrilia Press to become the next Advent Press, concentrating on critical books derived from *SFC* articles. Instead, Carey announced to me that Lee Harding had offered to put together a book about the Ursula Le Guin Writers Workshop that had been held the week before Aussiecon I. *The Altered I* would feature submission stories, stories written at the workshop, and 'atmosphere articles' about that magical week in the Dandenong Ranges. Again Irene designed the cover. Berkley paid for

American reprint rights, immediately enabling us to pay back our most pressing debts and start thinking about a program for publishing new works. (Not that Carey, Rob or I were in any way earning a living from our work on Norstrilia Press, but we could now see a way clear to publishing without going broke after the release of each book.)

In those heady days there were very useful publication grants from the Federal Government's Literature Board. With one of these, we published a book of the next major Writers Workshop in Melbourne, starring George Turner, Christopher Priest and Vonda McIntyre. George edited *The View from the Edge*. More didactic about the art of writing than *The Altered I*, it gives a vivid idea of the workshop method (that is, the Clarion Method adapted for Australian conditions).

Even after three releases, our position was precarious, and Carey always had to put a hand out to some 'investor' or other to keep the program going. However, we felt that we were doing books that would never be looked at by the mainstream publishers. Only ten years later did we conclude that books that probably won't make money for Murdoch or Pearson probably would never make money for us either.

In the late 1970s we kept going because (a) we succeeded in gaining publishing grants from the Literature Board, which meant we could break even on a book after it had sold 500 copies; and (b) we bought an IBM Electronic Composer (the golfball-type typesetting machine), with which I typeset about twenty books, both for us and for other publishers. This typesetting business gave me a healthy income from 1978 to 1982, and saved a small fortune in costs for NP itself.

Gradually we became more and more ambitious and foolish. In 1970 John Bangsund had been in touch with Keith Antill, whose book, *Moon in the Ground*, had won The Dame Mary Gilmore Award in manuscript, but had not found a publisher. No Australian mainstream publisher would touch SF at that time. Carey tracked down Antill, bought the manuscript, and that became our next project. Stephen Campbell, whom I had met in Ararat in 1969 when I was publishing the very first issues of *SFC*, did the cover.

We sold enough copies of *Moon in the Ground* to consider publishing another novel. My great dream of publishing SF criticism was politely but firmly squelched. I was always outvoted two to one. NP decided to do Damien Broderick's *The Dreaming Dragons*, which I had read in manuscript before Norstrilia Press came together. It had languished for two years, but when we came back to it, Damien had already sold it to Dave Hartwell's Timescape Books in America. We had to buy rights from Timescape in America, which added \$2000 to our upfront costs. However, both the American paperback and our hardback were well reviewed, and we were able to sell Australian paperback rights to Penguin Books. Again, we had snatched poverty from the jaws of bankruptcy. *The Dreaming Dragons* came second in the Campbell Award, was chosen by David Pringle as one of the Top 100 SF Novels Ever, and generally gained us a fair bit of prestige. (It was hardly a bestseller in Australia, which is why we can offer the only edition still in print.)

At about this time Roger Zelazny offered us the only edition, in both hardback and paperback, of his second

book of poems, *When Pussywillows Last in the Catyard Bloomed*. Poetry! Had we gone stark mad? If we'd had adequate American distribution, we probably could have sold quite a few copies of this book. In the end, we didn't. Worse, because we were publishing a non-Australian author, *Pussywillows* wasn't eligible for a publishing grant.

Our greatest publishing disaster was, you guessed, a book of SF criticism. At the time Kirpal Singh and Michael Tolley were both teaching in the English Department at Adelaide University. They put together *The Stellar Gauge*, a collection of fine critical essays written by prestigious people. Sladek's essay on Disch was my favourite essay (never reprinted anywhere, although it's one of the best things ever written on Disch), and I had glee in my fingertips as I typeset George Turner's magnificently nasty essay about Fred Pohl's *Gateway*. *The Stellar Gauge* seemed to me then, and still does, a repository of Fabulous Stuff, but . . .

*The Stellar Gauge* was the third book we did in one year. Usually we did one book a year, then waited for the returns before considering the next project. Broke, we were doing a risky project. We borrowed almost all the costs from a friend of Mike Tolley. She was not a fan; she did expect to be paid back within a reasonable time; and the book failed utterly. I still don't know whether she ever received back all her money. The book failed because there was no definable audience for it in Australia. If we could have clicked into the American college market we might have done quite well. The book had a rotten cover, about which I protested. I was outvoted again. I've always been afraid to ask what Carey did with the umpteen boxes of unsold *Stellar Gauges*.

Norstrilia Press was the first Australian specialist SF publisher since the downmarket fan presses of the early 1950s. Manuscripts poured in. Almost without exception, they made us flinch. Many of them, rescued from deep desk drawers, were literally stinkers. Phew!

But there were exceptions. One day the mail disgorged the manuscript of a nicely satirical novel, *Lavington Pugh*, by Adelaide writer Jay Bland. He used SF as an enabling device for quite a funny novel about the lunacies of the 1960s. Not a great success, but it didn't lose money and we've never regretted publishing it.

One day we received an astonishing manuscript from a bloke from Western Australia called Greg Egan. The first twenty pages were almost incomprehensible, but they were real writing, chewy and funny and passionate. At length the reader discovers that the main character is a teenager, living in Perth, Western Australia, who has a camera in his head. Day by day he films his life, but he can't retrieve the film to develop it. *An Unusual Angle* is the story of him and the film he can never make. The subject matter is suburban high school life in Australia in the 1970s. That might not sound exciting, but it was, and still is, unique in Australia. All other Australian school stories have been written about impoverished kids in isolated country schools or (Gillespie grits teeth) rich kids in private schools.

As it proceeds, *An Unusual Angle* becomes increasingly zany and funny and vivid. We discovered that Greg had written it when he was seventeen. When we published it, he was still in his early twenties. It received only one major review (Veronica Brady in Van Ikin's *Science Fiction*), didn't sell much, but it put a bomb under Greg Egan. In the next few years he sent us five novels and three books of short stories. They were brilliant but unpublishable. They still have not been published. At the 1985 Worldcon Carey, Lucy and I actually met Greg. He lurked at the edge of the last hours of Aussiecon II, observing fandom in all its glory.

Nobody in the SF world has set eyes on him since.

Because of Norstrilia Press's fabulous incapacity for publicity, most Greg Egan fans still do not realise that *An Unusual Angle* ever existed, and do not know that we still have copies for sale. Meanwhile, I'm told that secondhand copies fetch fabulous sums in America.

Our greatest success arose from a commission, not a submitted manuscript. In 1971 I had been working with Gerald Murnane at the Publications Branch of the Education Department. Although we shared a passionate interest in books, I did not realise that Gerald had been writing a novel for the previous ten years. That first novel, *Tamarisk Row*, appeared in 1973, to considerable acclaim. For some years I typed the manuscripts of his novels, including a large book that would not sell. I suggested detaching one 20,000-word section from it and releasing it as a novella/novel (in a large-print edition). Norstrilia Press published it in 1981 as *The Plains*.

The first cover we put on it was so blindingly awful that the distributor refused to put copies in bookshops. In one week, Carey gained a marginally better cover from an artist friend of his and had 1500 copies of the new cover printed. The ecstatic reviews began to appear before copies were in bookshops.

It's impossible to describe *The Plains*, although I have a go in my entry on it in the Nicholls/Clute *SF Encyclopedia*. I talked about it in a Conference paper that Van Ikin published in *Science Fiction* in 1982. No longer was Norstrilia Press publishing only science fiction; we had waded out into the big wide puddle of Australian Literature, literary establishment style. *The Plains* was nominated for, and came very near to winning *The Age* Book of the Year for 1982. It's our bestseller — the only book of ours to sell more than a thousand copies in hardback. It might now be out of print.

Flush with Murnane success, we did his next book, *Landscape with Landscape*, a series of five linked novellas, including at least two stories that I would call SF. It did not sell nearly as well as *The Plains*, and gained no prizes. Murnane announced that he would be sending his next book to another publisher, but never again sold as many copies in hardback as he did for us.

We weren't good at publicity. Carey wouldn't untighten the purse strings to spend money on advertising, and we didn't know how to get our authors featured on radio (which, more than TV, sells books in Australia). However, Carey's mother Esta, who had been in the PR business, decided to have one last fling to putting us on the map. She organised the launch at the Melbourne Planetarium of David King's collection of SF/fantasy/magic realist stories called *Dreamworks* (1982). (We weren't to know we should have patented the title.) Some very good stories there, including Greg Egan's first published short story, Lucy Sussex's first, and the last piece of Gillespie fiction. We had good reviews; I think we made our money back.

Time was running out for the small publishers. With its funds constantly crimped by both conservative and Labor governments, in the mid 1980s the Australia Council started to move away from funding books of fiction, but at the time were still not doing much non-fiction. In the mid-1980s I met for the first time in many years my English tutor from 1966, Dinny O'Hearn. He remembered me, as he remembered all his former students, and agreed to write a one-page critique/puff for George Turner's *In the Heart or in the Head*, his literary biography. George's book got a grant, John Bangsund edited it (whereas all the other NP books had been edited at the keyboard by me during the process

of typesetting), and the book came out. There are lots of copies left in storage. Somehow many boxes of them were left under a house in a western suburb of Melbourne, and have never been seen since. Ask Carey the full story. (Also, I still have a box of *In the Heart* at my place.)

*In the Heart or in the Head* is, of course, my particular favourite among the books we published. At least half of it a literary essay (a history of SF), it was therefore a return to the world of criticism for Norstrilia Press. It arose from my attempts to get George to do a new version of his 'On Writing About Science Fiction', his famous long essay from 1968. And George's writing credo, contained in *In the Heart's* last chapter, posed a challenge to himself: what would this ideal SF novel read like? George's answer was *The Sea and Summer (Drowning Towers in USA)*, his magnum opus, Arthur Clarke Award winner, etc. etc.

And that is the story of Norstrilia Press. It's all about fannish friendships, fabulous Carey Handfield publishing stunts, and our naivety at mistaking the impossible for the possible. We didn't lose any money, but we didn't make much. Eventually we came unstuck because Carey got a new hobby. In 1984 (as I remember) he and Jo got together, and shortly they were thinking about marriage, and kids, and houses, and they had a shed full of unsold Norstrilia Press books. Jo said 'I only married him for his junk', but eventually the junk was disposed of, and Carey distributed a modest profit to the three of us. Between us we still have a few copies for sale of all our books except *Electric Shepherd*. Our prices are \$A14.95 for paperbacks plus \$A24.95 for hardbacks, plus postage. Try us for a good deal. I don't know what to charge for *An Unusual Angle* now. Anybody know the current secondhand price?

Norstrilia Press stopped publishing because (a) Carey gained new interests in life: wife, kids and household; (b) Gerald Murnane did not offer us the novel that fol-

lowed *Landscape with Landscape*, and (c) our next project, a book of SF stories set in Australia, to be edited by Harlan Ellison and Terry Dowling, was scuppered by exactly the same factors that have stopped *The Last Dangerous Visions*. Ellison made all the noise; Terry was left out of pocket; in the end Carey, Rob and I couldn't care less. Each of us had livings to make and other fish to fry. A few years later, Carey declared a dividend, which helped to pay my pressing debts of the time, but there was never that silver tinkle of cash to push *SF Commentary* back into regular publication. Instead I began publishing *The Metaphysical Review*. Most people have forgotten what we did (although other people, such as Jonathan Strahan, have chosen to misrepresent everything we attempted to do), and in the end our main 'rival', Cory & Collins, made no more money than we did. Australian SF stalled for a few years until the mainstream publishers began to take it up; once the big birds moved in, the boom really began.

**Footnote: Why there may never be a Second Edition of Philip K. Dick: *Electric Shepherd***

The centrepiece of *Philip K. Dick: Electric Shepherd*, Norstrilia Press's only book to sell out, is Stanislaw Lem's essay 'SF: A Hopeless Case, with Exceptions'. The exception, of course, was Philip K. Dick, who repaid the compliment by coming to regard Lem as his deadly enemy. It's not worth doing a second edition of *Electric Shepherd* without including that essay (plus George Turner's long article of comment on it), but meanwhile Stanislaw Lem has turned on Franz Rottensteiner, his main English-language publicist for nearly thirty years, believing that Franz had turned on him. Meanwhile, I'll reprint Famous Phil Dick Essays from *SFC* here if anybody has anything she or he particularly wants to see in a hurry.

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## Long black limousine

### The mailing comments

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MAILING No. 182, JUNE 1998

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**Lyn McConchie: FAN'ATIC 63**

I've just looked up 'diverticulosis' in Elaine's handy medical dictionary. Ooh . . . er. You can have that all your own, Lyn. Given the usual level of medical diagnosis, it'll probably turn out to be something else again. (It did, as Mailing 183 reveals.) Meanwhile, I hope you can find some relief.

Imagine the mayhem if we tried putting our lot in a cat show. Not that any of them would win. None has a pedigree. Each is a blow-in who needed a home and found cat Utopia. I was talking to a friend at a party on Saturday night. He suspects that cats have a city-wide information network that makes the Internet look flimsy. No sooner did one of his cats fight a losing duel with a car, winding up in hospital (recovering later), but a new cat strode through the back door and wandered up to the fridge. Now they have three cats instead of two.

Thanks for the news of Cherry Wilder. I sent her the latest *TMRs* but haven't heard from her yet.

**Eric Lindsay: KINGDOM OF THE BLAND**

Jean's and your lives have changed so completely since this was written that perhaps it's not worth making comments at this end of the year. We're waiting to hear how you settle down at Airlie Beach, and whether the angina attacks have finally disappeared.

Only 149 boxes to move? If ever we moved, 200 boxes would probably not be enough. We won't be moving.

Somebody on Timebinders downloaded a Baltimore newspaper account of Bucconeer that was actually fair, accurate and stimulating. But, as somebody else on Timebinders pointed out, the article was run on the Monday of the convention, and therefore was useless in recruiting members. This used to happen in the late sixties and early seventies when Keith Dunstan wrote favourable columns in *The Sun* about Melbourne Easter conventions. They would appear in Dunstan's Saturday column in the middle of Easter, too late to recruit new members of the convention.



**Alan Stewart: YTTERRBIUM No. 48**

I hadn't heard about your friend Gary. The worst of it is that I nearly did the same the other day: walk out in front of a moving bicycle. Wellington Street is officially a bikeway as well as one of the busiest non-freeway streets in the inner suburbs. I'd checked cars going both ways before stepping off the footpath — only to see a bike heading right for me. I stepped back in time. If I'd been hit, it wouldn't have been the cyclist's fault. I hope she heard my 'Sorreee . . .' as she whizzed past.

A friend of friends of ours was killed this way. 'He always did that,' said our friends. 'Always stepped from between cars straight onto the road. It's a wonder he wasn't killed years ago.'

Dick Jenssen managed to buy all three D. F. Jones *Colossus* books from amazon.com.

You must be kidding, Alan. The name 'Irene Pagram' doesn't ring a bell! Irene was living with Lee Harding for twenty-five years, and married to him for fifteen (until December last year). She drew the Norstrilia Press logo, designed the covers for the first two Norstrilia Press books, did covers for many fanzines in the 1970s, and designed the window decorations for Space Age Books. She and Lee were the social centre of Melbourne fandom for several years when they were living in St Kilda. And Irene is the sister of Sue, who is the wife of David Grigg. Which is why she is tuckerised in David's novel, and did the cover and illustrations.

'Recent Reading': I refer you to my rather odd list for the last few months. Thanks for lending me *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*, just about the only non-compulsory book I've read recently. (Writers of Young Adults SF and Fantasy Books are busy little scribblers.) Of the books on your list I've read Baxter's *Titan*, Ryman's 'Was . . .', Paul Collins's anthology *Fantastic Worlds* and Vol. 2 of *The Year's Best Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Very little overlap.

Come on, Alan. Nobody could think that I am a cat fan. Elaine is the cat fan around here. Remember that.

Of your TV, Film and Video lists, I've seen *The Ice House*, which I didn't like much, *Short Cuts*, which I want to see again before deciding whether I like it or not, *The Shawshank Redemption*, which is brilliant, *A Dance to the Music of Time*, which was entertaining, although I assume it's superficial compared to Powell's series of novels, and *Terminator II: Judgment Day*, which has become one of my favourite movies. The full-length director's cut is worth catching. I enjoyed *Men in Black*, a real skiffy film, and *Starship Troopers*, which is very funny in a revolting way.

**Elaine Cochrane: FUDGE FACTOR No. 2**

I know everybody else will say the same thing, but: 'You didn't stay long in ANZAPA, did you, Elaine?' There is always space in a Gillespie fanzine for a Cochrane contribution. One problem, though: your writing makes the editor's contributions look rather ordinary. Maybe you should write my stuff as well.

**Cath Ortlieb: YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HOME WHEN YOU FIND A WOMBAT IN YOUR BED No. 57**

I don't see how you can oppose violence in children's literature (i.e. as a total ban) when violence is at the centre of children's experience. I'd agree with your disgust about the portrayal of casual violence, such as that shown in vast numbers of TV shows that children watch. But deeply imagined, well-written literature for kids would have to include the many varieties of violence perpetrated by kids against

each other, and by powerful people against kids. The beauty of Garner's fiction, however, is that he sets up the situations in his books as dilemmas, not 'problems'. He concentrates on real experience, not clichés. I've noticed in current Australian Young Adults fiction an unwillingness by authors to come to grips with any sort of deep experience. Action is everything; the plots rush, rush, rush, like a high-speed shopping trolley crashing along a supermarket aisle. When the story has crashed about sufficiently, it finishes all in a clatter, and just stops. Garner knows how to go deep, not fast.

Loved the cartoon about Word. This happens at least once a day when I'm working on a Word document. Fortunately, I still use Wordstar for all my basic word processing. Unfortunately, Word is the prescribed medium of exchange between us and our clients.

**Gerald Smith: RAMBLINGS No. 9**

Thanks for the news of Womble.

You neglect to say that Martin Gardiner's *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science* is one of the funniest books of the last fifty years. I agree that it is a great pity that he has never updated it from the version of the early 1950s. Other people have written similar books, especially John Sladek in *The New Apocrypha* (1973). But even that book is now way out of date. As you say, an encyclopedic *Fads and Fallacies* is needed more than ever.

**David and Sue Grigg: MEGATHERIUMS FOR BREAKFAST**

With nearly the entire year gone, we've visited your place once (and done nothing about arranging a return visit) and I've enjoyed a superb production of *Carmina Burana*, thanks to you. But you're as busy as ever, and so are we. So much for the social graces of inner-suburban living!

And thanks again for the CD of the MLC production of Mozart's *Requiem*. A world-class performance; very enjoyable.

I wouldn't mind becoming the boffin from the back room. At the moment I've moved so much to the back room that I've been forgotten altogether by my clients. Perhaps I can finish a few fanzines before they remember me.

I don't understand how your 'clean computers' safeguard works. As soon as you put any program on a Windows 95-based computer, it slings vast numbers of DLLs and Registry entries into Windows itself, and even the most thorough uninstall programs fails to remove them all. At least, that's what I've found. Maybe you use a fully effective uninstaller. (If so, what is it?) Or do you simply reinstall Windows 95 after you've fully tested each product?

Tasmania sounds my sort of place. Does one freeze at Lake St Clair in January, or do the icicles melt for the summer holidays? Thanks for the warning, Sue, about travelling by boat to Tasmania. If ever I go there, I will go by plane.

Is there any program, David, that includes simple stencils/wizards for drawing street maps? For Neighbourhood Watch I've tried constructing a map of our area with Ventura and with Pagemaker, and given up in frustration both times. Even Corel Draw, with its umpteen thousand pieces of clip art, doesn't include a street map stencil or wizard.

I couldn't replace more than a few of my valuable books, so I would feel very pained to lose my collection. But in recent years I've lost access to more and more of the collection, as all the new books have been stored in boxes. I don't know which box any particular book is in at any one

time. I even forget which books I've bought, but Justin always remembers those he's sold to me.

**Leanne Frahm: FROG OF FROG HALL No. 4**

I hate to say something insulting about someone else's pet, but don't you think Johnny is just a bit . . . stupid?

You're wrong, Leanne. The newsgroups and listservers keep charging on, each an electronic apa, hundreds of messages per day, but the print apas also keep charging on, hundreds of pages per year. You can't say anything substantial on the Internet. When somebody posts a longer piece on Timebinders, it has to be very interesting for most subscribers to take the trouble to read it. Any sign of leisureliness in a posting and I find myself clicking to the next message. I find Timebinders a good way to get in touch with people with whom I can trade print fanzines. Often they are people with whom I've been out of contact for years. The real change in communication is the challenge offered by Web fanzines — although they are free, I have to find them, not they find me. And I simply don't bother, or I don't realise that a favourite fan writer can now be found on the Web. I won't do *TMR* and *SFC* on the Web (a) because I still have no idea how to write a Web document, and (b) because I cannot guarantee that what I write will reach the people I want to reach.

If there is any complaint we Boring Old Farts can make about the Boring Young Farts, it is that they aren't exactly ragers. If the Melbourne SF Club is any guide, they are very pleasant, rather puritanical young people who seem to have spent too much of their childhood and adolescence in front of a TV set. In some dim dark nearly forgotten era, we did rage. I have the flab to prove it.

A Word document rarely stays the same when you move it from one computer to another, or one printer to another. Even worse, it will often print out a document at a different length from that shown on screen. Another Horrible Word Feature. The desktop publishers, such as lovely Ventura 4.1, print the document exactly as it appears on screen.

**Roger Sims: THE TRUE FAN PARTY LINE No. 2**

Thanks for (yet another) great cat story. Usually cats make friends, as yours did, but more than six months after the arrival of Violet, Polly still hates her, and will stalk her given half a chance. Violet pongs! At least to Polly she does. Elaine gave Polly Ovarid for some time to calm her down, but that merely made her dopey and grossly tubby. So she put Violet on a course of Ovarid, which took away enough of her pong for Polly to put up with her. When Elaine took them both off Ovarid, Polly became aggressive again, but at least she regained her old personality and she is starting to become thin again. Polly still will not accept Violet as anything but an intruder cat who happens to stick around the house.

It's good to know where to find a competent computer repair shop, isn't it? Doesn't happen very often. We seem to have a good place in Collingwood, called Green Systems. There are four Vietnamese people who, when I go past the door, always seem to have their noses inside computer cases repairing something or other.

My doctor was equally helpful when my blood pressure showed as quite high during an examination around Christmas time. 'Avoid salt,' says he. Oh? Fortunately a week later my blood pressure was back to normal (well, 140/80 is too high, but it's a lot better than the figure the week before).

When you see the photo of the view from out of Jean and Eric's front window, you won't both attending Aussiecon; you'll just head straight to their place and stay there.

A yum cha is what is called in America a dim sum, i.e. a Chinese brunch, preferably partaken at 11 a.m. on a Sunday morning, consisting of small portions of dozens of different dishes. These days Chinese restaurants in the city offer yum cha every day of the week as a substitute for a normal lunch menu.

As I've written here before, a psychiatrist speaking on the ABC's *Health Report* early this year said that psychiatrists disapprove of ECT but often find it works, although they don't know why; and they approve of drug treatment, because they know how it works, but often find that it doesn't. That's why the profession still uses ECT, despite its poor public image.

Yes, ABC Radio ran all the BBC programs from the 1950s to the 1970s, and even did short-run Australian seasons of some of them (for example, Spike Milligan performed in *The Idiots Weekly*, an Aussie version of *The Goon Show*). *Just a Minute* was played here for a few years, but it always seemed the least listenable of the BBC Shows. My favourites were *My Music* and *My Word*, with Frank Muir and Denis Norden, now both dead.

Thanks for your reminiscences of various American conventions. Reading stories about the great stuff-ups and triumphs of American con-running has been one of the advantages of downloading Timebinders postings. Some 1950s and 1960s conventions are still very vivid in the memories of some fans. (And the conventions I remember best are my first three or four, plus Torcon II in 1973 and Aussiecon I in 1975. Details start to get hazy after then.)

As in America, World War II pulled Australia out of the Depression. More importantly, it made the country independent in the production of manufactured goods as well as primary goods. That huge advantage (reflected in the strength of our currency until the mid-1980s) has been completely thrown away by the current flat earth economists. What's 'rational' about them? Traitors all!

**Marc Ortlieb: MY PINK HALF OF THE DRAINPIPE No. 1**

I lose a few kilos during weeks when Elaine and I eat at home. But then there are weeks such as last week, when I ate out four nights in a row. At home we don't eat entree or sweets with our night meal, but often I'll have both if I eat out. I never drink wine at home, unless we have dinner guests (which is almost never). And I suspect the main meals in restaurants are loaded with extra salt and fat, no matter how carefully I try to choose healthy food.

But despite all that, my weight would drop slowly but surely if I didn't work at home. Snacks to keep my eyelids up during boring Paying Work do the damage.

I hadn't thought of Marc Ortlieb as a Master of Subversion, but I really like the idea of the putting the Anti-Football League poster beside the footy tipping competition results.

**Jean Weber: WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE No. 52**

Thanks for the photos of your new home (although they do look a bit better on the Web page). Aussiecon III ho! 1500 American fans will turn up on your doorstep on the same day.

Thanks for this particular part of Irwin's GUFF Report. Very entertaining fannish stories. Perhaps the whole report will appear as a single volume before 2010.

**John Newman: PING!**

When you wrote 'I've never killed a Native Australian' I thought it was a lead-in to a story of narrowly avoiding the

slaughter of a road-wandering wombat. But you had other matters to discuss.

Using the word 'sorry' in relation to the main pattern of Australian history seems ludicrous. No one in politics will say what should be said: 'British settlers waged a genocidal war on the people who had occupied this country for many thousands of years. The British waged war with guns, alcohol and European diseases, and they came close to extinguishing the people who occupied this continent. The least they could do now, even if a hundred years too late, is sign a Peace Treaty to set up a workable legal relationship between the two sides who fought the war.' The Mabo decision got rid of the *terra nullius* assumption that was the foundation of all Australian land ownership law, so now the way lies open to write a just treaty about land ownership and use. In the current political atmosphere, I won't be making bets on it happening.

With Kennett in charge, or rather that ghastly Transport Destruction Minister, Robin Cooper, the Met ticket stuff-up is exactly what we might have expected. The ticket machines work slightly better on the trams than on the trains, which is why I haven't been afflicted the way Stephen and Marc have been.

Thanks for the great Trucking story. Who'd believe there are people (such as our friends Robin and Frances) who want to move to the country?

**Michael O'Brien: MODULE No. 131**

No wonder David King wrote to me offering Big Money for my old *Uncle Scrooge* comics. He wants to have his fix now that he can't buy new Disney comics.

Yes, we would miss the 'Trivia Challenge' on Friday night 3LO if we were ever home to listen to it. Most Friday nights we arrive home some time between 10.30 and 11 p.m. The worst crime of Friday night football, however, is preventing Melbournites from watching (or taping) *Inspector Morse*. Without it, there is nothing to watch on TV all week except Wednesday night's *The Movie Show* on SBS.

I saw the article on Paul Wheelahan. He was one of the comics artists who attended the Australian Comic Artists Panel at Syncon I in 1970. Whatever happened to Keith Chatto, my other favourite Australian comics artist of the 1950s?

79 Davey Street looks just like the house I would like to own and live in.

**Michael Green: REALITY MODULE Nos. 3 and 4**

Don't let a friend's comments destroy your confidence in your book. Send it around to publishers! Make sure you attach a punchy synopsis (i.e. a one-page advertising blurb) to the manuscript, since no publisher's editor these days reads a manuscript unless the synopsis sounds enticing. Keep it moving. Try overseas publishers who do the sort of books you like reading.

I have the same problem with the second part of your 'Future Imperfect' article as I had with the first part: I agree with it so completely that I can't think of anything to add. I particularly like your analysis of the 'deeply offensive' Microsoft slogan. Joseph Nicholas wrote a good article in his latest political fanzine, pointing out that most of the money in the world now is not used for anything; it sloshes around, used purely for speculative purposes. All that money was generated originally by the productive services of individual people, but has now been siphoned off so that it cannot be used to improve the lot of any individual on earth, even individuals who are astronomically 'rich'. A tiny

part of this wealth would provide the drinking water and basic amenities for all the world's poor people, but if anybody tried to spend it on such purposes, it would immediately lose its speculative value, and hence disappear. So George Turner's prediction of a complete financial breakdown (see my George Turner Memorial Lecture and George's own *The Sea and Summer*) is almost certain to happen, followed by a depression in Western countries that would make the 1930s Depression look mild. I doubt whether what would follow could be fashioned into your 'democratic humanism'. Probably not many of us would be alive after the turmoil.

I'm a sucker for people writing about their dreams. The one you describe is obviously one of those Big Ones that you remember the rest of your life.

I've just edited for Oxford University Press a rather obtusely convoluted book about the nature of consciousness, *The Crucible of Consciousness* by Zoltan Torey. It should be out soon. After disentangling some of the tortuous prose I found a convincing argument that consciousness is not the sort of thing that could be programmed into Artificial Intelligence machines, or if it were, it could only happen if the AI computer were indeed conscious. It's a bit hard to work out what Torey means by 'consciousness', since he keeps defining it in terms that themselves have prolix explanations. What I think he saying is that consciousness is a continuous feedback loop between, on the one hand, our sense of past, present and future (which we apprehend as 'the present') and on the other hand, our sense of 'out there' and 'in here'. We have consciousness to the extent that we can separate ourselves from incoming information and derive conclusions about this information. Torey's awkward way of expressing himself makes it impossible for me to summarise his thoughts more succinctly than that; but after struggling with the book for a few weeks I became convinced that he has made an honest effort to pin down what the mind actually is, as opposed to the mechanical elements that might or might not be used in its construction.

You don't have to do anything remarkable to 'join' the Nova Mob; just come along and enjoy yourself. You don't even have to pay dues. First Wednesday of the month, 8 p.m. at the home of Lucy Sussex and Julian Warner, 13 Frederick Street, Brunswick. Dinner, for those interested, at Alasya, 555 Sydney Road, Brunswick, at 6 p.m. See you there.

Printwheel and dot matrix printers seem to have been built well. The printwheel printer I bought in 1986 has long since found another home with a friend of mine. It's never broken down, but he thought he would have to replace it until he found a box of hundreds of printer ribbons for \$25 in a secondhand store. Twelve years' continuous use: that's not bad for a computer-based product.

I haven't seen Ann Sydenham for awhile. She used to live in Northcote, and I would often see her on the Smith Street tram, but she must have moved. When last I talked to her, she was working in an office in the city, and had married during the eighties. Otherwise, she still looks much the same as she did when she was delivering magnificent insults to customers from behind the counter at Space Age Books.

See my comments about Diana Wynne Jones's *Minor Arcana* elsewhere in this issue. Russell Hoban has moved away from children's books since the 1970s, although I believe he still wrote some books for young children after he had abandoned Young Adults fiction for general fiction.

You could say that in calling a character Old Man

Gillespie (a) David was being prophetic; or (b) he was observing the strict rules of Tuckerisation (definition: in a work of fiction one adopts the name of a well-known fan but tries to make the character as different as possible from the real-life person). Of course that's what David did. My favourite Tuckerisation is in, as you'd expect, a novel by Wilson (Bob) Tucker, *The Lincoln Hunters*, in which the character Robert Bloch is pictured as a weedy cowardly jerk who unwittingly wrecks the time expedition to Illinois in 1855.

Have I ever written music? Hah! In my head, perhaps, when lying in bed at night. I have absolutely no practical ability at music making, but I do know how to choose a great library of CDs. I just wish I could afford them.

My favourite slogan is 'Never exclude; only include'. Having said that, I realise there are a few composers I do exclude most of the time, especially Delius, Debussy, Stravinsky, Liszt and Wagner. I've heard wonderful pieces by each of them, but . . .

RYC must mean 're your comment', RYCT 're your comment to', and RYCTM means 're your comment to me'. But I've never been able to figure out what RAEBNFC means. People started using these terms in the 1980s in apas, without offering explanations of their meanings.

Congratulations on landing the job. It's not a job I would even consider applying for, since I don't have a clue how to do things with bits of the Internet. I still haven't found the wormhole into HTML, etc.

Your 'journeys' sound all too familiar; rather like mine during the 1970s and early 1980s. I managed to get through all that, thank ghod; it's such a relief to feel free to get on with life.

Don't ask *me* all those questions about SF on TV. I don't watch it, for exactly the reasons you point out. The trouble is the TV SF is written by Hollywood script writers, who can't be expected to know anything about anything. Even with access to today's technology, film-makers (for instance) rarely show that they have any ideas. And without brilliant ideas, all the film-making skill in the world is worth nothing.

Although usually I don't like amateur fiction in fanzines, I liked 'Figurine'. I presume it was based on a dream; perhaps you should have retained only the images from the dream, without embroidering them. I haven't had much luck trying to write stories based on dreams. The magic of the experience doesn't translate unless one can find a way to convert dream logic into story logic. (Good examples are some of Graham Greene's best short stories. You can see where the dream inspiration came from, but also admire the remorseless story-telling logic that shapes the dream into a satisfying piece of fiction.)

Cartoonist Bruce Petty draws economic systems as vast purposeless machines.

#### **Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP June 1998**

Yes, I would rather like to have that high metabolic rate. Damien Broderick, who couldn't put on weight if he ate all day every day, tells of feeling very self-conscious when a teenager because of his extreme thinness. I, unfortunately, had my first noticeable weight gain when I was seventeen, dropped a lot during the two years I attempted to teach, and have put on weight steadily since then.

Thanks for that information about the Heisenberg interface. I'll keep it in mind when next I'm travelling by hyperspace starship to the Green System.

Surely you can't award the IRS Golden Caterpillar Award unless you get permission from the originator of the

Award, Paul J. Stevens? And if you do that, why not re-establish the Awards at future conventions? The problem would be to track down the venerable Paul J. to ask his permission.

Stefan the 'nerd of everything'? Haven't you told him about science fiction fans, Bill?

Live commercials being screened at railway stations in Sydney sounds *very* science fictional. Surely Stefan is making this up?

You are wrong, Bill. What nearly stopped ANZAPA in its tracks in 1973 was not an attempt to change to *quarterly* mailings, but to *monthly* mailings. Nobody had time to do mailing comments before the next mailing appeared; mailings became thinner and thinner. Fortunately the experiment lasted only a few months before reverting to the bimonthly system.

I like the idea of 'country music English style' on the BBC. What sort of music is that?

'Galactic Hero and Oaferlord'. Why not use that title for your apazine, Bill?

#### **Sally Yeoland: LE CHAT PARTI No. 35**

Odd that I've just realised how appropriate this title has become. *Le chat* has indeed *parti*. Both *chattes*, in fact.

Since I haven't held down a regular job since 1973, I haven't been forced by some antediluvian boss to attend the equivalent of the Kelvin Club. How were you able to sit there listening to Ruxton without fleeing screaming? I love the definition of English-style food as 'boarding-school food'.

I've conveyed your compliments to Violet. Like any other cat, she already knows how wonderful she is, but she purred thanks, anyway.

I'm glad you were able to get the house you wanted. I can't even imagine what sort of a house John will end up living in. Since it seems as if he's trying to cut himself off from fandom, we might never find out.

#### **Cheryl Morgan: SCRATCHING POST No. 8**

As we were discussing on Friday night over a large table in the Myer's Caf, what would be the point of telling you that none of the accusations you make about Australian conventions have any truth to them, since you wouldn't listen anyway? And by mutual acclamation, ARCon and ANZAPACON were voted the two most enjoyable Australian conventions of recent years. Basicon received a favourable mention, too. Each was a convention of about 100 in attendance. Each aimed at allowing people to get together and enjoy each other's company.

And as various ANZAPAns have said many times, without you paying the slightest attention, we welcome overseas guests with open arms (except when our wives, husbands or other partners are around). The point of staging a world convention (as opposed to a very large national con) is to make it possible to meet all those overseas people with whom we've conversed only through fanzines, letters or email. However, we're unlikely to pay much attention to people from half a world away who try to dictate to us in detail how to run a convention.

#### **Terry Frost: THE ROAD TO BALTIMORE**

As I've said elsewhere in this issue, there is now nothing worth watching on free-to-air television. Well, nearly nothing. The SBS series of *Classic Album* was great stuff, with all that hah-I-bet-you-didn't-know-that! information about some of my favourite LPs (*Electric Ladyland*, *Graceland*, *Rumours*, *The Band* and *American Beauty*). Ageing rock stars

might be vague about who they were sleeping with in 1968, but they can remember exactly how that plink! was recorded in that spot on that track on their LP. I wish the series had also covered the great British LPs, such as *Fresh Cream*, *Beggar's Banquet* and *Led Zeppelin II*.

I'll ask Dick Jenssen whether he's bought *Cannibal! The Musical* on DVD. Just his sort of film.

Yeah, *Sweeney Todd* is great. I've seen it on a video taped from TV, and don't know whether it's available to buy.

What's weird about 'Pink Shoe Laces'? You're talking about classical music now. It was No. 1 in 1959 when I first began to listen to pop music. That was the era of the great novelty songs; my favourite was 'Alley Oop' by the Hollywood Argyles and, a few years later, Charlie Drake's 'My Boomerang Won't Come Back'.

#### **Jeanne Mealy: LAND OF 10,000 LOONS**

My mother, sisters and I saw *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* the week it was released in Melbourne, but I don't remember Pat Boone doing anything with a sheep! Not the Pat Boone image at all. More details, please.

Dick Jenssen has promised to show us *Joe's Apartment* one day, but Elaine thinks she can pass on that one. Sounds irresistible to me.

Like you, I don't like to read stuff on computer screens, so I print out the emails I want to read. The trouble is that this process uses up a lot of ink cartridges on Elaine's printer.

On Timebinders somebody raised the possibility of calling the Fan Lounge at Aussiecon III the 'fwa suite'. I wrote that he'd better ask Ian and Karen first.

#### **Richard Hryckiewicz: ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE No. 20**

I've never got around to asking: why did you want to have your beard removed permanently?

Thanks for the tip about the China Bar. I haven't been there, but will keep it in mind when next I eat lunch in town. Most Chinese food sits too heavily on my stomach for me to face it at lunchtime. Usually I'm located a few streets to the west of Russell Street. My lunch-hour recommendation is Cafe Max in Hardware Lane. Fine salads, which you can have by themselves, or with well-made meals such as vegetarian lasagna. Sometimes I eat at Cafe Segovia in Block Place, but the variety of lunch dishes is not great, and some of them are a bit nouvelle-cuisiny for me. My favourite lunch place is not in town: it's Melting Pot in Smith Street, Collingwood, only a hundred yards from home. I must ask the Masters of Aussiecon if I will be allowed to contribute to the Giant Melbourne Restaurant Guide that will, of course, be included in each member's show bag.

Thanks for the Hryckiewicz Report. On Page 4 you talk about the joys of living on your own, which you're not at the moment. The last time I was living on my own (1976) I went close to nuts. Which was a surprise, because all my childhood and adolescence I had thought that there could be no greater pleasure than living alone.

Kinesiology must be doing you some good; you can enter our cat-ridden house without your nose blocking up immediately.

Who said members of ANZAPA are 'conservative'? We live in the same apa as Terry Frost, fghodsake! Tell all about 'the rest of the changes'.

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### **MAILING No. 183, AUGUST 1998**

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#### **Leanne Frahm: THE ANZAPOLL**

Oops, sorry. I've just looked at this mailing for the first time since I've received it. And it's now the second week of September, so I've missed the deadline. But I'll send you my poll anyway.

#### **Eric Lindsay: GEGENSCHIN Nos. 82 and 83**

Unemployed at last! Not an original line, but it's wonderful how much passion you can put into saying it. What's not clear is how you're going to survive without an income. (Though I've just noticed Jean's comment about your income for the next six months or so.) I'd love to retire, but those bills troop endlessly into the letterbox.

If we can't get in touch with you in a hurry by email, can we get in touch with Jean? Surely email is even more necessary than ever for her job now she's at Airlie Beach?

#### **Jean Weber: JEANZINE No. 118**

First I'd heard anything about the actual journey to Airlie Beach. It sounds as if north of Brisbane the airlines operate much like American regional airlines, i.e. like bus services. (That's what Terry Frost reports, anyway; sounds as if they've become very slack since I was in America.)

A short Thylacon report — but others report that most attendees spent most of their time sitting around nattering.

Yep, I'm in a perpetual buyer's market. When I have a bit of money in the bank, as at present, I never know how long it must last. Elaine is currently knee-deep in a chemi-

stry textbook; woefully written and presented, but the client will pay because it knows Elaine will eventually make sense of it. The trouble with maths/science is that I can't pick up any errors in the maths or science itself, although I can turn out quite a nice-looking book.

The main thing to visit in Las Vegas is the home of Joyce and Arnie Katz. But what else does one do in a foreign town but visit the local fans?

I might agree with your definition of 'entrepreneur' if I really thought I were some sparkling ghod's gift to the editing profession. But I don't; I'm only intermittently good, when I'm offered interesting projects; editing is only a way to earn money so that I can publish fanzines. And I can think of no way to earn money doing that, so it's pointless entrepreneuring as a Fanzine Editor.

#### **James Allen: KALIEN No. 27**

Elaine and I didn't get around to sending a card, so Congratulations! to you and Jeanette and the new person at the Allen household.

I'm glad somebody else has a dream fanzine in mind. My Dream Fanzine, if I could finance it, would be a combination of *Metaphysical Review* and *SF Commentary*, consist of 40 tightly packed pages a month, and appear regularly on the first day of the month. Even more ideally, I could afford to pay contributors — but that would make it into a semi-prozine, not a fanzine, and therefore destroy my credibility. I'd settle for enough money to print and post the magazine

I've just described, and have the time to do it.

Your memory mode is failing you, James. The point about *Get Stuffed* is that it was published by the Boring New Farts in order to unseat the Boring Old Farts. And now you admit You have become part of Us!

I'm glad you're feeling better after the heart attack. I can't help wondering when mine's due, since my physique is much more like yours than it's like Eric's. What you haven't told us is the blow-by-blow account of the heart attack itself. Or is the retelling too painful at this stage of recuperation?

#### Lyn McConchie: FAN'ATIC No. 64

Thanks for telling us about your (shudder!) computer nightmare. Your bloke who decodes dud disks sounds like the kind of person every fan wants to have at the other end of a phone line. I save everything to Zip disk from my hard disk, but I rarely make a further save-back to some other medium.

I wouldn't like to be told I have 'inferior Q-waves', especially as I have no idea what Q-waves are. I'm looking forward to the next *Fan'atic* for the Answer to your Medical Quest. Why can't doctors learn to diagnose?

#### Jeanne Mealy: LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

'What is the Kevin Dillon zone?' Other people in this apa could give you more information than I can, but here goes . . .

Kevin Dillon is possibly Australia's most eccentric fan. He's famous for his inability to pass any piece of printed matter without collecting it and storing it at home. By the 1980s his house was completely filled with books, magazines and newspapers. Completely filled. There was one very narrow corridor down which people could move. To navigate the kitchen you had to climb over a vast hill of printed matter. At least that's what I've been told, since I've never visited the house. Some time in the eighties Kevin was evicted, but nobody seems to know what happened to him or his collection. I presume he must now be living on a pension, since he no longer travels to Melbourne for conventions. When he did have money, he would bid for the most valuable items at the auction, then leave the items he'd bought at somebody's place until he could 'pick them up'. When he got them home, they disappeared inside his house.

Yes, sampling yum cha at Melbourne's Chinese and Vietnamese restaurants is probably sufficient reason for visiting here. When will we get time to attend Aussiecon itself?

My \$260 shoes? You forget the current low value of the Australian dollar. Last I heard, 1 Australian dollar buys only 58 US cents; or 1 US dollar buys \$A1.72. It's a similar disaster story re sterling, with one Australian dollar buying only a third of a pound. The best shoes I've found so far are a brand called 'K Shoes', imported from Britain. If two years ago they cost \$260 a pair, imagine what they cost now! They save me money, however; with upkeep, each pair lasts for years, whereas until 1993 I was buying \$70 shoes (i.e. average price) and wearing them out in three months.

'Who is Michael Hutchence?' Mind if I splutter, Jeanne? The lead singer of InXS; the nearest thing Australia has had to an international pop superstar since Judith Durham of the Seekers; and famous recent suicide . . . but did he really commit suicide, or was he the victim of a Foul Plot?

With two Terry Frost DUFF Reports from Minneapolis (yours and Joyce's), Terry probably hopes he won't have to

write his own. But he's sticking to his story that he will produce The DUFF Document by the end of the year.

Your back page is great. Somehow Minneapolis sounds much as I expected — except during the spring, summer and autumn, of course.

I don't think I'd want to put my future in Loreena Bobbitt's hands.

#### Terry Morris: HOLD THAT TIGER!

Now we'll have to wait till the October mailing for the next exciting episode of *The Disappearance of Mango*. We've only had one cat, Julius, who disappeared without trace. Cats disappear because they've slipped into factories and offices and somebody has shut the door on them. The longest any of our cats has been shut in was eight days — Sophie. Theodore has had various entrapments, all his own fault. The longest was three days and four nights. So I guess Mango will eventually escape from wherever she is; I just hope she can find her way home again.

I like Raphael's bit. He'll do well when he starts playing the piano.

*Starship Troopers* is supposed to be outrageously funny. I can't see how anybody could take it any other way.

I trust you enjoyed Paul Kincaid's review of *The Regeneration Trilogy* in *The Metaphysical Review* 28/29. It is one of those books I dragged from the bottom of a box at the beginning of the year, hoping to read it Very Soon Now. Somehow my reading schedule has passed it by, and it's slipped back into a box to slumber away for a few more years.

#### Joyce Scrivner: INTERMITTENT ROAMING No. 1: AN EVENING WITH TERRY FROST

I've also seen this on Timebinders, but waited until now to read it. Welcome back, Joyce. I hope you get around to mailing comments as well.

The reason why it was worth posting this on Timebinders is that Timebinders and rasff were used to track Terry across the American map. Seemed for awhile as if everybody had lost him in transit. Terry is a bit too big a parcel for that to happen for too long.

Nate Bucklin! Now there's a name to conjure with. Would he happen to know what happened to APA-45 during its dying days?

Why do you need to campaign for 'Australia for 51st State'? I thought it had been annexed thirty years ago.

There is actually an Amazon Bookstore on an actual street in Minneapolis? Are all 2.5 million volumes stored there?

Thanks for mentioning those Fabulous Fannish Minneapolis Names. I've never been in contact with Geri Sullivan (because she's never sent me her fanzine and I've never quite got around to sending her mine), and haven't set eyes on Linda since her DUFF trip here with Ken all those years ago. But keep those names rolling, Joyce.

#### Karen Johnson: OUT OF THE KAJE No. 1

Welcome to ANZAPA, Karen! Your first issue looks and reads a lot better than my first ANZAPazine (*The Marshian Chronicles* No. 1, in the very first mailing in 1968) and infinitely better than my first genzine (*SF Commentary* No. 1, January 1969).

At last! An ANZAPA member who's under thirty! Thanks for the personal stuff, some of which you've told me in letters. If you were a 27-year-old primary teacher twenty years ago, not only would you have been a permanent staff member (not an emergency teacher) but you would have

been earning a decent salary. The best thing that ever happened to me was being born in the right year (1947 — a vintage season).

I'm moderately afraid of most things, but I admit I've never skipped a heartbeat when faced with a black swan. But then, the only time I ever see black swans is when I visit the Botanical Gardens.

It's easy to feel uneasy on an escalator. (Now there's a good first line for a song I'll never write.) Occasionally I've found it hard to stand up after stepping onto one. But scared? That's a bit strong a word to use about an escalator.

I like your list of phobias. Mine are so prosaic by comparison: fear of dogs and heights. I'll go to a fair amount of trouble to avoid an unleashed dog in the street, and on a ladder I can't go higher than about a foot off the ground.

There don't seem to be any unneutered male cats around our neighbourhood. Theodore, who is neutered, thoroughly enjoys being beaten up by stray cats. He's constantly annoyed that we try to keep him confined to our property.

Elaine gave up steak tartare, but not for the reason you list. She became allergic to steak (beef, veal, etc.). She'd eat it, enjoy it, then she'd feel dizzy, and within an hour it would come straight up again. I enjoy the occasional rare steak, but these days I don't get to eat it unless I order it at a restaurant.

Since your page 7 is not covered by your own artwork, why not get in touch with Dick Jenssen (all details on page 3 of *TMR* 28/29) and he will send you some fabulous art down the line or through the post. Or play with some of the clipart packages. Or run cat photos.

I hope that everybody agrees with you about the value of the proposed GST, but the latest polls, three weeks before 3 October, suggest that you can fool 51 per cent of the people if you spend \$15 million on an advertising campaign. But I don't see why I have to suffer because television watchers/voters are burbling idiots. I agree with everything else you say in your political rant.

Pagemaker: so what *can* you do with it? I must admit it's awhile since I've had Pagemaker on my machine (because installing it also installs some Adobe printer drivers that stop my current printer drivers talking to my other programs). But when I was trying to learn it, I found that I could not do what is easy in Ventura: i.e. tell any bit of text whether it should be column-wide or page-wide. If your Pagemaker page has columns, it seems that you have to put your page-wide heading in its own little box and move that box up and down as your text changes. Very inconvenient. I have the same complaint about Quark XPress.

But *you* might have found an easy way to get over this problem.

Text runs on automatically from page to page in Ventura. Pagemaker's system seems very inconvenient.

Surely recent versions of Pagemaker have a spell checker? I thought you need only change to Text View, then run the spell check there?

I'm only guessing, but I would have thought the easiest way to prepare most of your text in Pagemaker is the same way you do it for Ventura or Quark: i.e. write it all in a word processor, make all the corrections there, then import the text into your Pagemaker document. For instance, I write all this magazine in WordStar and run its Spellcheck. As late as possible in the process I import it into Ventura 4.1, where it automatically hyphenates the document and fills as many pages as are needed. My text document is linked to the Ventura setup, not embedded in it, so I can make all further

corrections by going back into WordStar. The main purpose of editing in Ventura is to add graphics and fancy headings, and to correct poor hyphenation.

Thanks for the book reviews. I'm a great fan of *Distress*. It's filled with ideas, and ideas are still the main reason for reading SF. Especially if you are Greg Egan and your ideas are ahead of those in *New Scientist* instead of way behind, as in most SF. But what's most powerful in *Distress* are the great images, especially the descent through the middle of the biologically manufactured island.

#### David Cummer: EVERYDAY PRACTICAL DESPERATION

Welcome to ANZAPA. Two new members in one mailing! How many mailings is it since this happened?

But you're not under thirty. Oh well. You *are* from Minneapolis, which counts strongly in your favour. Thanks for the family history, but it ends just as you're about to relate some of your own history.

'The best little hippie in Fargo, North Dakota.' Surely there's a title there for a movie or a Ken Fletcher cartoon strip.

In a not-very-alternate universe, the stamps on the Australian envelopes would have been *australien*. It's not even clear why Le Pèrouse did not claim the continent for France before Phillip actually raised the flag at Sydney Cove in 1788. Some historians claim that the Portuguese could well have made the first European claim 200 years before *that* but they didn't have the navigational technology to work out that this is a separate continent.

I've had great trouble finding anybody with whom I can discuss country music, especially the 'Twang' style, which is *alternate* country music, i.e. anything but Garth Brooks. Alternate country includes all the hip under-thirty performers, but it also includes many older people, such as Emmylou Harris and Johnny Cash, who are no longer played on mainstream country radio stations in America. Here in Melbourne we don't have a country station. I try to catch the small number of programs that turn up on the alternate/public radio stations (what you call 'college stations').

You could always republish your NAMES article here. We have a particular interest in the whole Quilt project, as several Melbourne fans made a section for the Australian national AIDS quilt when Roger Weddall died in 1992.

Some Australians are unkind enough to equate the State of Victoria with the Era of Victoria.

*Arsenic and Old Lace* is a special film, but I agree that it hardly makes the best use of Cary Grant's facility for light comedy of manners.

Timebinders has a lot of valuable material on it, including a recent account by Linda Krawecka of holding the 1987 Worldcon Fan Lounge in a space at the Brighton Metropole that was being renovated during the entire convention. The people running the Fan Lounge kept the workers on side by offering them unlimited amounts of beer from the communal supplies. The building workers, in turn, allowed them to build the main structures of the Fan Lounge in and around the scaffolding. People remember this as one of the great Fan Lounges.

#### Leanne Frahm: FROG OF FROG HALL No. 5

Thanks for telling us about the death of Kerry's stepfather. But of all the possible ways of dying, surely dying in bed at 74, otherwise hale and hearty, is the best way to go? But as you say, quite a shock for everybody else in the family, especially for Kerry. Becoming executor of an estate can be six months' hard work, as Elaine found when her father

died. Best wishes from all ANZAPAns.

Of course you should 'disclose the bizarre and macabre discovery' made while emptying Len's house. Where else but in ANZAPA?

Wish I could have been at Thylacon to see you being deliriously happy. And that delicious little Ditmar Award can't have hurt.

Microsoft Publisher is cheap enough for me to buy it sometime. But if it fills vast numbers of megabytes on my hard disk, as most Microsoft products do these days, perhaps I don't need it. Ventura 4.1 does almost everything I want it to do, and I can do the fancy black-and-white covers in Quark.

### **Sally Yeoland: LE CHAT PARTI No. 36**

If somebody were to ask me in years to come what was the most gracious piece of writing I had ever read, I would probably offer the first three paragraphs of page 2 of *Le Chat Parti* No. 36. Thank you for the clear account of why you felt that you had to split up with John. I doubt if I know anybody else who could write about such a wrenching life event without in some way firing daggers at the other person.

Our most recent moving day was nearly twenty years ago, and we haven't forgotten how horrendous it was. I remember in particular the peculiar deep despair of not being able to find the simplest basic kitchen utensils for days after piling them up in boxes in the kitchen. The first things we unpacked and put up on shelves were the books. During that process we received our first visitor, Bruce Barnes. I can't remember the reason for the visit. Roger Weddall and Charlie Taylor also visited on the first day. A vast hill of boxes had been dumped by the removalist in the front room, which we had chosen for our bedroom. The new bed was scheduled to arrive any day from Myer's, so Roger and Charlie calmly moved over 70 boxes from the front room to the middle room. No wonder we never get over losing Roger, or will ever be able to repay Charlie for the many kindnesses he's given us over the years. But then, we'll never forget the spectacular wedding present that you and John offered us at the same time: organising at your place in Derby Street, Kew, a celebration party that turned into the kind of 'wedding reception' we could never have put on for ourselves.

I hate Paying Work when I'm doing it, and thoroughly enjoy the things I do (such as fanzines) when I'm not doing it, but I have to feel edgy about any hours that I can't charge for.

### **David Grigg: MEGATHERIUMS FOR BREAKFAST No. 16**

When a few years ago I attended the reunion of my sixth-grade class, I was a bit shocked at the number of people who had turned out exactly as I might have guessed if I had thought about it in 1958. There were only three of them whose faces did not fit my memory of their eleven-year-old faces.

I did not find anybody at my reunion with whom I could talk music. Or books, for that matter. I was the only book-worm in my class at that time. A couple of friends at high school were as interested in pop music as I was. One of them is now dead, and the other I have not set eyes on since 1965 or 1966.

I've already commented on how enjoyable I found the MLC rendition of *Carmina Burana*. As I think I said at the time, watching the live version as well as listening to it gave me an new idea of what the piece was really all about.

The first four Patricia Cornwell novels were excellent,

but suddenly they became very unconvincing. A recent magazine article mentioned that she had busted up with her publisher and, in particular, her publisher's editor after the fourth book. The change of editor shows. I haven't bothered reading her most recent two books.

I retain a sneaking feeling that one day I might get the time to read the Dorothy Dunnnett 'Lymond' series, but I've never seen the six of them sitting together on the one bookshelf. And I would have to start at the beginning, wouldn't I? A month or so ago, Peter Craven recommended in *The Age* the third of the Cormac McCarthy books about the American West. One problem: the first in the series, *All the Pretty Horses*, has disappeared from every bookshelf in Melbourne. I'm not reading the series until I can buy the first novel.

If ever I get the Internet on my computer, I'll try out CD Database. I'd certainly like to catalogue my collection, but I don't know how to use database software.

I will look out for the CDs you mention. Thanks for the recommendations.

If all that's on the Internet, I haven't discovered it yet. I'm usually too exhausted, after downloading all the Time-binders messages each night, to begin experimental Web surfing. Every now and again I look for my own name. Last time I did this, I found my article on Jonathan Carroll on the Jonathan Carroll Home Page. When I made contact with the bloke who manages the page, he said that Carroll had given him the article. And Carroll could only have got it from Franz Rottensteiner, who was his neighbour when he (Carroll) was living in Vienna.

But when I actually go looking for something I really want to find — no go! total frustration!

### **Michael Green: REALITY MODULE No. 5**

I find myself agreeing with you over and over without being able to add much to what you say. The deadly boredom of schooldays, for instance. Surely I could have got through all the early stuff in a few years, then sunk my teeth into interesting work. (It was a bit of a shock when in Form 5 (today's Year 11) I had to begin studying conscientiously in order to pass exams.)

I was pretty good at academic literary and historical essays by the time I finished Third Year at University, but had to relearn to write when I began to write for fanzines. Mentors such as John Foyster and George Turner taught me that it was possible to say things clearly without using clotted language. No wonder current academic theoretical writing, especially in what is called 'Cultural Studies', seems to me treason against the English language itself. I feel the same way about much poetry, but occasionally find poets such as Philip Hodgins, whose work shows absolute clarity yet great flexibility and beauty.

The only reason to write is because you have something to say, then find the right form, then the right words to say it. People still say 'I'd rather like to write' without having any sense of what they *must* write. Since I have no sense of a necessity to write fiction, I don't. But I still have some essays I want to write; now it's a matter of finding the time to do the research.

I must confess that One Nation gained much more support between the beginning of the year and the Queensland election than I would have thought possible. What I would want, of course, is for a genuinely democratic anti-'rationalist economics' party to form the Third Force. The Greens and Democrats between them should be pulling 25 per cent or more of the vote, but that's not happening.



Instead people in some parts of Australia are voting for a party that plugs into legitimate sources of discontent, then is loony enough to blame Aborigines and Asian immigrants, whose lives are even more ruined by current economic forces than are lives of One Nation supporters! Why don't they blame the people who created the current nightmare: the people in suits who live in Vaucluse and Toorak and who get their kicks and incomes from sacking people? I can understand angry, hurt people, but I cannot understand people being stupid enough to kowtow to the rich and powerful.

I agree that greed is one of the basic instincts of babies. In a civilised community, the basic instincts do not disappear, but are modified and integrated into a socially responsive civilisation. America foists onto Australians a baby culture: I want! I grab! Australia has had its periods of civilisation, when there has been a sense of a total Australian adventure, but in the last twenty years it has been captured, reduced, babyised, disintegrated. Still, we can keep in our minds a sense of what a civilised country would be like, in the hope that it returns one day.

#### **Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP: E. E. SMITH SPECIAL**

This is the Grand Work that during these many centuries of fan activity you have been preparing us for. Too bad I've never read any E. E. Smith. I don't even understand most of what Kimball Kinnison is reported as saying (page 3). Was E. E. Smith a mad genius? Am I too stupid to read him? The answer, alas, may be Yes to both questions.

I proceed to page 4, the Wright Stuff, Bill's Magnum Opus, the article I asked you to write for *SF Commentary* in 1976. (I'll ask for your Zelazny talk now so that you might turn it in for the January 2019 issue.) Let's see what you have done with your mighty subject matter.

My main feeling is that if E. E. Smith had tried to sell his books to publishers today, and therefore had had to sell each by offering a synopsis instead of a manuscript, he would remain unpublished. You prove effectively that the stories themselves are complete nonsense. What, then, made the books interesting? Your quotations from Schuyler Miller give a some idea of why people liked them at the time.

I'm confused. Where is your detailed study of the main Smith books, *The Skylark of Space*, *Skylark Three* and *Skylark of Valeron*? You have a short section on his other famous series, the 'Lensman' books, then highly detailed stuff on later, minor Smith, such as *The Galaxy Primes*, *The Masters of Space*, *Lord Tedric* and *Imperial Stars*. I still can't work out from your account the overarching structure and main themes of Smith's works. I've missed something vital here.

Viagra was invented by E. E. Smith in 1953? Who'd have thought it?

We veterans of 1971 (not 1973, as you state here) refute page 12, Bill. You committed the worst sin of all: COMORG tried to organise Australian fans. Twenty years before, Graham Stone discovered that this was a vain enterprise, destined to end in tears, anger and eternal damnation. In the early seventies, for every erg of effort of yours to organise we put in an equal amount of energy to disorganise. Disorganisation rules in Australian fandom. May it ever be so, amen and amen.

Sorry about hogging the photos at Ciao, Bill. Ask to see them when next you visit Lucy's for Nova Mob. She likes showing them; it's just that there was a slight problem fitting eight people around a table meant for five that night, and nobody else got to see the photos either. (Look at the photo

of the view from Greg and Astrid Bear's front door! If nothing else will, this would make anybody want to become rich by writing fabulously bestselling skiffy novels.)

Thanks for our bimonthly dose of *The Thoughts of Stefan*. A few movies have been based on virtual reality advertising. Cronenberg's *Videodrome* doesn't quite make sense, but it's on the right track. I suspect that Stefan's speculations are not exaggerated.

Several SF writers during the sixties speculated that the ideal way to write a novel is to put one end of a very long roll of toilet paper in the typewriter, begin typing, and finish the novel on the last piece of toilet paper — a legitimate use for 'Le lungo papier de toilette'. Unfortunately the development of the word processor and bubblejet printing have made this use impossible.

Stefan's essay on 'Our Defences' is a documentary, not a humorous piece. He should stand for parliament in the hope that somebody in Canberra will headhunt him to reorganise the Navy.

I deeply disapprove of running stuff downloaded from the Internet in an apazine, but the Darwin Award candidates are quite entertaining. When I interview a few of our cats, I will offer a few more contenders.

I suppose our cats behave perfectly when you visit, Bill, because you are visiting them. They are awestruck by perfection in a human being, whereas Elaine and I are just part of the furniture.

If your copy of *Boys Own Fanzine* 4 is in the Wright Collection at the MSFC, surely you can go out to the Club on a Friday night to refer to it. But make sure you travel with Alan Stewart. When I went out there the other night, I would have been hopelessly lost without Alan's clear sense of tram navigation. (I had forgotten that the direct tram from the City to West Brunswick travels up William Street, not Elizabeth Street. I never would have reached the Club if Alan had not said, 'We get off here', then 'We get on here' when the correct tram arrived at the entrance to Royal Park.)

I have a reading policy that is the opposite of yours. With so many wonderful books crowding into the house every day, how can I afford to waste time rereading old books? (I do occasionally, and never regret rereading, but I like to keep up with the best of the new stuff.)

Lindsay Thompson, a 'thoroughly decent human being'? If you say so, Bill. He was laughable as a premier, especially as he was installed after Dickie Hamer was booted out by his 'pals'. If Hamer had stayed, Cain might never have become Premier.

And thanks to D. Jenssen PhD for the luvverly pictures of colliding galaxies. I'm particularly impressed by Figures 4 and 5.

#### **John Newman: PING!**

Richard Hryckiewicz has just run his jim-dandy little program through both Elaine's and my computers, and both are Y2000 compatible. Whew! Both have recent BIOSes, so I suspected we wouldn't have problems, but it's nice to know for sure.

Thanks very much for your reaction to *Metaphysical Review* Nos. 26/27 and 28/29. I must be doing something right; now I have to find the money to keep doing it.

'Left' and 'right' describe the arrangements of seats in the post-Revolutionary parliaments in France in the early nineteenth century. When the party system was still amorphous, each person sat in place according to a spectrum of left to right, and each had to know his place pretty clearly.

At that time it was pretty easy to draw the spectrum in France between clerical/monarchist ('right') and secular/democratic ('left'). I agree that many of the economic policies fired out by One Nation are much the same as ideas I've been firing here for years. The real difference lies, as I've outlined elsewhere in this issue, in difference in the groups we blame for our national troubles.

**Marc Ortlieb: MY PINK HALF OF THE DRAINPIPE No. 5**

You offer condolences to Leanne and John about GST? What about Gillespie & Cochrane? Books and publishing have always been free of wholesale tax, but will be GSTed by the Coalition. And suddenly we will have to charge our own clients GST. The whole publishing industry is going to contract sharply, we'll be lucky to get paid, and at the same

time we'll have to do the Government's tax-collecting work for them! I cannot go on. GST is too deeply depressing a subject to discuss further.

If it had been any good, the *MUP Encyclopedia of Australian Skiffy* should have been a *Who's Who of Australian Science Fiction*. But I don't have room here to do my *Encyclopedia* grump.

The cover for the most recent *\*brg\** was printed for me by D. Jenssen on his Epson Stylewriter 400 at 720 dpi. The cover for this issue will be printed on our Epson Stylewriter 600. It probably won't look as good, as I won't be using the fancy paper that Dick uses.

When that picture was taken with Brian and Margaret I was pretty frazzled after five months on the road. Also, my hair hadn't been cut for about a year.

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## BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

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

- \*\* Books highly recommended.
- \* Books recommended.
- ☹ Books about which I have severe doubts.

\*\* **MINOR ARCANA by Diana Wynne Jones**  
(Vista 0-575-60191-4; 1996; 287 pp.)

After nine months of reading the entries for the Young Adults category of Australia's Aurealis Awards (see next page), I've begun to wish I could find a trace of Diana Wynne Jones's brilliance in the books I've looked at. I feel vaguely ashamed that I have not yet read all the other Wynne Jones books I have on the shelves. *Minor Arcana* contains a number of short stories, including the quicksilver hilarious 'The Sage of Theare' and the passionate 'The Girl Who Loved the Sun'. One of the best pieces of fiction I've read this year is the novella 'The True State of Affairs', which seems to consist only of the thoughts and observations of a girl (hints that she is a time traveller arrested by troops of this alternate, vaguely Renaissance Britain because she has been mistaken for a princess on the run) who is locked in a cell and can observe nothing but her jailers and the other prisoner (male, obviously Someone Important) who paces incommunicado in a nearby courtyard. Wynne Jones fills this arid space with the wonderful voice of her main character and the strength of her storytelling.

\*\* **PICNIC ON PARADISE by Joanna Russ**  
(Ace 020-08072-060; 1968; 157 pp.)

Whenever somebody asks me what I'm reading lately, I say that I'm either reading a Young Adults book or a Joanna Russ. I won't say much about the Russ books here, since I'm supposed to be delivering a talk about them to the Nova Mob in November. Russ is very unclear about the initial setup for this story. I can't work out why this small group of terrestrial travellers is hiking over dangerous countryside on an alien planet, except that it has something to do with some kind of war in which they've become trapped. Startling is the voice of Russ's famous hero Alyx, hired as a guide but finding herself dragged into the role of nursemaid to a vaguely upper middle class types who have few

survival skills.

\*\* **THE ADVENTURES OF ALYX by Joanna Russ**  
(Timescape 0-671-45900-7; 1983; 192 pp.)

Joanna Russ is good at puzzling me. The 'Alyx' of each of these stories has the same voice and personality of the 'Alyx' of *Picnic on Paradise* (which is reprinted in this book), but the rest of her background falls into the spaces between the stories. We guess that she was born in Phoenician times ('The Barbarian'), was picked up by the far-future Time Patrol ('I Thought She Was Afeerd . . .'), and is trained to travel between time zones ('The Second Inquisition') and planets (*Picnic on Paradise*). But whereas she is described as a feisty *small* person in four of the stories in this volume, in 'The Second Inquisition', that classic time traveller story, she is shown as very tall and seemingly awkward. Which makes me think that this story should be part of the *Extra (Ordinary) People* series, and that the unnamed main character is not Alyx. But surely Joanna Russ assembled this volume and knows which of her characters is which? The quality of the writing varies greatly, from a nervous, rather high-pitched yabbering ('I Thought She Was Afeerd . . .') to deeply felt, intense story-telling ('The Second Inquisition'). At least the reader can never take Russ for granted.

\*\* **THE FEMALE MAN by Joanna Russ**  
(Bantam 553-08765-125; 1975; 214 pp.)

I've read so much vague crap or well-meant explicating about this book that I'll save my comments for November. If you've never read it, hear ye! hear ye! *The Female Man* is a fiercely funny and wildly surrealistic comedy about four characters in search of a time zone of their own. This novel shows the best of New Wave SF style: take nothing for granted, ride the English language like a roller coaster, and let the reader enjoy the ride or fall off behind. A reminder that SF was exciting stuff for about seven years (1968-1975).

\*\* **CHILDREN OF GOD by Mary Doria Russell**  
(Villard 0-679-45635-X; 1998; 438 pp.)

*Children of God* doesn't have the formal shapeliness of *The Sparrow*, and after about the halfway mark it is not based primarily on revelation of character, which is the basis of the success of the *The Sparrow*. But it does weave

together a number of mighty themes; the set pieces are visually splendid; and it shows that this two-novels-that-are-really-one is as much about music and science as it is about religion.

\*\* **THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THE MOON** by Joanna Russ (St Martin's Press 0-312-02219-0; 1987; 229 pp.)

Here's Joanna, ace writer, all claws shining and literary muscles rippling. Here's the writer who should turn up in every year's *Best American Short Stories*, but doesn't, probably because she chooses to publish her stories in magazines with titles such as *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. Much less experimental than the novels, her short stories are filled with sharply observed conversations, memorable scenery, and unexpected shifts of perspective. Every word is picked carefully, every nuance caresses the consciousness. A wide variety of styles and approaches includes conventional SF stories such as 'Elf Hill' and 'Nor Custom Stale', based on startling SF ideas, dreamlike fables such as 'How Dorothy Kept Away the Spring' and, best of all, realistic, dagger-thrust-into-author's-heart revelations such as 'The Dirty Little Girl' (a key story in understanding all of Russ's work) and 'The View from this Window'. At her worst, Russ runs off at the typewriter, barely containing her fury at having to stick within the limitations of fiction.

\*\* **WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO . . .** by Joanna Russ (Dell 0-440-19428-8; 1975/1977; 170 pp.)

A few weeks before I read this book, I witnessed a rather silly discussion about it on Timebinders. This novel was judged to be boring because all it related was the story of people who were waiting to die. Um. We know *that* after reading the first three pages. An interstellar ship explodes before the crew can send a beacon; the survivors plus a minimum of equipment and food supplies land on an Earthlike planet; they can drink the water but the planet contains nothing they can eat. What is the best way to die? Most of the characters pretend that they won't, and try to set up a small community that repeats all the authoritarian aspects of the various societies that produced them. Not so the story-teller, seemingly another incarnation of Alyx (although that is not her name). She wants to die in isolation, in the least humiliating way possible, and she'll fight anyone who stops her. The book is a vivid mixture of a kill-or-be-killed yarn, stray memories of home and thoughts about the value of life itself, and effective scene-setting: the planet, barren yet seemingly alive, becomes one of the main characters.

\*\* **THE EIGHTH STAGE OF FANDOM** by Robert Bloch (Wildside Press; 1991/1962; 208 pp.)

This is a 1991 reprint of Bloch's book of fanzine articles originally published by Advent in 1962. His pieces from the late 1940s and the 1950s are models of fannish writing: amusing and filled with puns, but also filled with affection for that small band of happy rogues who made up fandom during the fifties. Harry Warner Jr told us all the facts in his account of the period, but it's left to Bloch to pour out the true spirit of fandom (especially in the inspiring 'A Way of Life') and draw sketches of the personages of the period (Willis perhaps captured better than Tucker, although

the whole book can be seen as an *homage* to Bob Tucker). Short essays about the advent of the beatniks, the death of pulp magazine SF, the rise of the influence of TV, and the first boom in filmed SF (twenty years before 'media fandom') let us step back into the fifties more effectively than a perusing a book of *Life* photos. Bloch's convention reports show us how far convention-going has deteriorated since the early fifties. Unexpectedly, Bloch ends with a tribute to James Joyce and two poems based on Lewis Carroll. 'Jabberwocky for Fandom' and 'A Non-Lewis Carroll' should be reprinted often. But so should most of these articles. No trace here of Robert Bloch the unutterably boring horror writer or Robert Bloch the fairly boring fantasy and SF writer. Here is the work of a master, and should be read by anybody who tries to write well for fanzines. (Thanks to Alan Stewart for lending it to me.)

\*\* **THE ZANZIBAR CAT** by Joanna Russ (Arkham House 0-87054-097-1; 1983; 244 pp.)

Repeat everything I said about *The Hidden Side of the Moon*, only more so. This book shows that Joanna Russ is one of America's greatest modern short story writers. I'm tempted to restrict my Nova Mob ramblings to her short stories. Four-star items are 'The Extraordinary Voyages of Amélie Bertrand', 'The Soul of a Servant', 'Gleepsite', 'My Dear Emily', 'The New Men' — two great vampire stories placed side by side — 'My Boat', 'Corruption', 'There Is Another Shore, You Know, Upon the Other Side', 'A Game of Vlet', 'How Dorothy Kept Away the Spring' (a repeat from *Hidden Side*), and 'Poor Man, Beggar Man'.

**And now for some more novels and novellas that I'll list unrated because they are contenders for the Young Adults section of this year's Aurealis Award. I'll talk about them after the awards are announced next year.**

**PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE** by Catherine Jinks (Penguin 0-14-038586-X; 1998; 238 pp.)

**RED CITY** by Sophie Masson (Moonstone 0-7322-5916-9; 1998; 200 pp.)

**VIBES: JIGSAW** by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0884-1; 1998; 136 pp.)

**VIBES: SHADOWS** by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0885-X; 1998; 138 pp.)

**VIBES: MASKS** by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0886-8; 1998; 136 pp.)

**FERAL** by Kerry Greenwood (Hodder 0-7336-0888-4; 1998; 220 pp.)

**VIBES: SUSPICION** by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0887-6; 1998; 138 pp.)

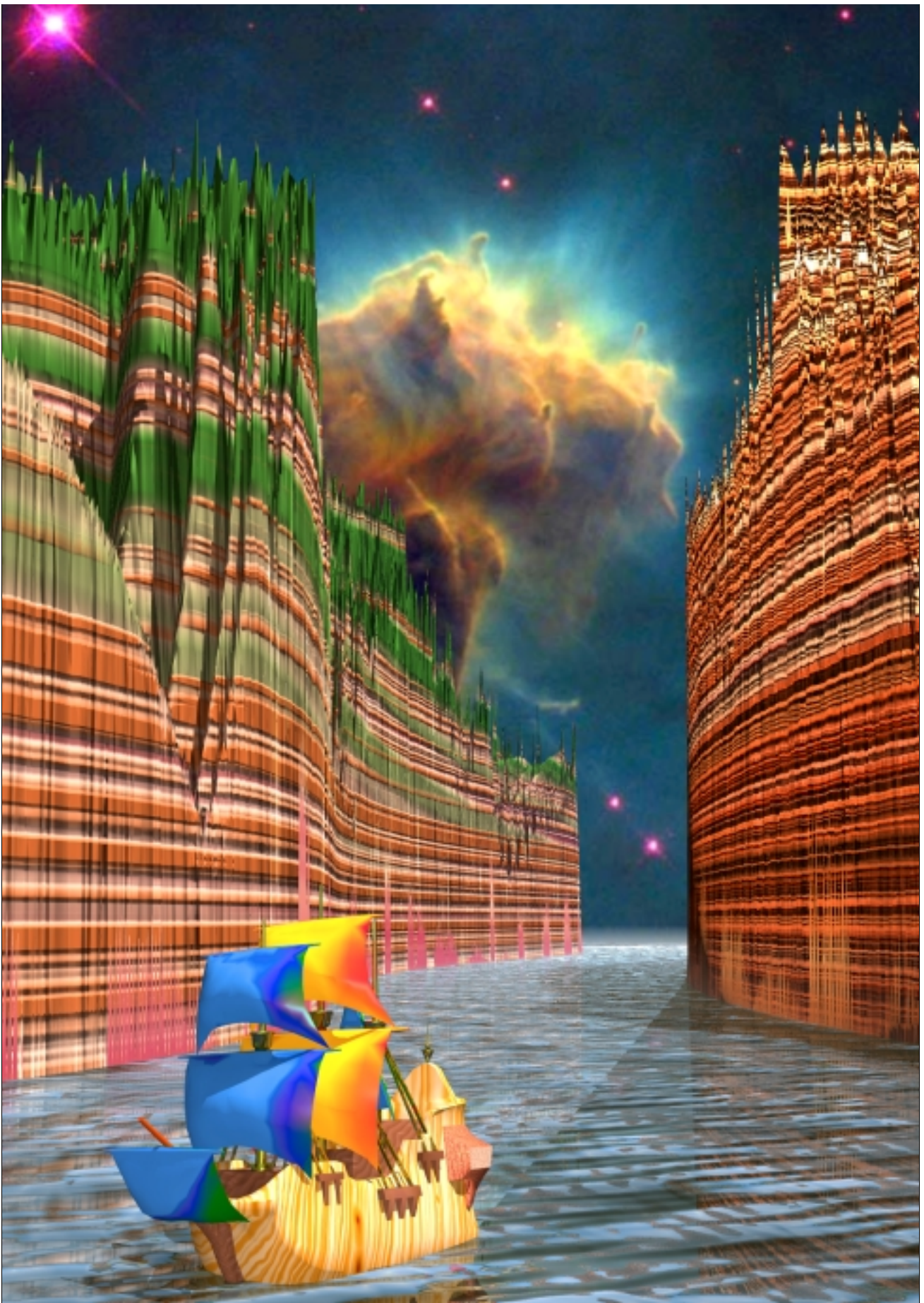
**THE HOUSE OF MANY ROOMS (THE DOORWAYS TRILOGY, BOOK ONE)** by Michael Pryor (Hodder 0-7336-0926-0; 1998; 222 pp.)

**SINGING THE DOGSTAR BLUES** by Alison Goodman (HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-5967-3; 1998; 200 pp.)

**HORSEHEAD BOY** by Rory Barnes (Angus & Robertson 0-207-19663-X; 1998; 170 pp.)

**TRANSLATIONS IN CELADON** by Sally Odgers (HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-5908-8; 1998; 269 pp.)

— Bruce Gillespie, 14 September 1998



'Idle Days on the Yann', cover graphic by Ditmar, using Bryce 3D, suggested by a story in Lord Dunsany's 'The Hashish Man'.