

A fanzine for the December 2007 mailing of ANZAPA and a few others
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Everything after the section below was written two to three weeks before Federal Election Day, 24 November 2007. At that time I made a lot of political speculations based on the likely results of the election. I simply waited until after 24 November, then updated my earlier comments.

Bye bye Johnny: 24 November: the morning after

Election Day, 24 November 2007, began as a bright, shiny Melbourne spring day. We had invited Elaine's two sisters and their partners to dinner, so Elaine had committed herself to a day's shopping and cooking. I had committed myself to vacuum-cleaning the carpets, a job I put off as long as possible. Two opinion polls, on the two days before the election, claimed a neck-and-neck contest between Labor and the Coalition. Every poll for most of the previous year had given Labor the win by margins varying from 6 to 10 per cent.

We've been to some miserable Election Night gatherings. Despite the congenial company, Election Night 1996 at the home of Charles and Nic Taylor was memorably depressing. As the Howard Government arrived, we hoped that a Howard Government would not be as bad as we anticipated. It proved to be much worse. The 1998 election, which we watched at home by ourselves, was even more depressing. Labor bounced back, gaining 52 per cent of the two-party-preferred vote, yet still could not win enough vital marginal seats. Howard's mob seemed to have perfected the skill, formerly the monopoly of Hawke and Keating, of retaining marginal seats even while the rest of the country seems discontented. 2001 was the fascist loony election, as Howard trounced immigrant boats and sucked up to his good friend George Bush. The result of the 2001 election became Australia's worst moment since 1954 — evil incarnate in the faces of the crocodiles of Canberra, reflecting, it seemed, the slaving faces of one's fellow citizens. Habeus corpus out the window. Madness, Afghanistan. Madness, Iraq. Then came the advent of Mark Latham,

who for awhile put Labor 10 per cent ahead of the Coalition. For a few months we thought he might become Mark Antony, but in the end he proved to be Cassandra posing as Cicero. The 2004 election was depressing, because we couldn't help feeling that Labor might have won if Latham hadn't shot himself and everybody else in the foot at the last moment. The voters disliked Latham so much by the time of the election that they allowed the Coalition to achieve the impossible: control of Senate. Its real agenda — war against workers — was put into effect.

A few weeks ago, ABC radio pundit Brian Coster made the most pointed observation about the 2007 situation: Howard lost this election because he gained his heart's desire in 2004: he won the Senate. He gave the game away. He pissed on the head of his 1996 supporters. By stripping away all those workers' rights, won over the last century, he made defeat possible. Until Howard pushed through the 'WorkChoices' legislation, many voters had been able to live with Howard. Howard out of control came as a shock for many. They turned. Smart new gleaming Kevin Rudd was elected Labor leader in place of tired old Kim Beazley. Suddenly Labor was leading the Coalition by 10 per cent.

Election Night 2007 was much longer than anybody anticipated. For us, it started nervously. The first results gave a swing to Labor of only about 3 per cent, not enough to change government. Maybe all those results came from country booths. By about 10 p.m. we felt at last we could begin celebrating. Maxine McKew's joy at winning Howard's seat (whether in the end she does

make it or not) allowed us to feel a lot happier.

Neither set of opinion polls were proved correct. The over-optimistic polls through 2007 proved incorrect, but so were the final neck-and-neck polls. It took nearly two hours for a confirmation that the real swing was 5.8 per cent overall, with some astonishing swings in some electorates, especially in Queensland (14.1 per cent in Dickson, and over 15 per cent in one of the others). Julia Gillard, Labor's deputy prime minister elect, sitting with the ABC TV team, grew more and more confident. Nick Minchin, who had smirked in victory over the last dozen years, proved pleasantly gallant in defeat. Anthony Green, master psephologist, and Kerry O'Brien, master interviewer, looked much older than three years ago. By 11 p.m. they revealed themselves as dead tired.

Eventually Howard conceded, with one of the best speeches of his career. Howard looked all-to-human, conceding not only government but his own seat, and I was tempted for a minute or two to forget all the harm he's done — to Aborigines, to workers, to university students and staff, to potential migrants, to first-home buyers, among many others. Rudd in victory went on and on, with what we hope will be one of his worst speeches. Rudd victorious hardly inspired confidence, with his machine-chiselled good looks and clichéd assurances. I wasn't much convinced by Hawke in 1983, either, and I was right. The only one of the current mob of politicians I like is the Greens' Bob Brown, but I can't share his confidence that the vote will matter a damn in stopping the Tasmanian forests being converted to wood pulp. Labor politicians can be bought, just like Coalition politicians. I just hope there are enough Greens in the

new Senate to allow it to become vital and nippy again.

My reasoned reaction to this election is fairly cynical. Howard has so poisoned the political waters during the last few years that I don't see how they can be purified. My personal reaction is coloured entirely by my private superstition. Hawke gained government during 1983. During 1984, Brian McCurdy at Macmillan offered me the permanent-freelance job that kept me going until early 1996. They were my good years. Howard arrived in 1996. By the middle of 1997, I no longer had guaranteed freelance work. While Howard reigned, my career went bung slowly, until now I'm almost down and out. Even Elaine is scratching with work, although for most of the last fifteen years she has done well. Will the return of Labor bring returned prosperity to the Gillespie-Cochrane team? Or will the new Labor era prove merely a rerun of old Coalition times — bread and dripping forever?

How did the Election Night gathering go? Very well. Elaine's cooking proved as wonderful as ever, and we all had a great time. I finished vaccing the two main rooms, but I still need to finish the rest of the house. The main niggle came from Elaine's sister Valerie, who was dismayed to find that Fran Bailey (Lib.) was returned in her seat. 'I don't like Fran Bailey,' said Val. 'I've met her!' Four days later, Bailey is struggling to hold her seat. It might be two weeks of careful vote counting before we find out that outcome — or even whether John Howard has become only the second Australian prime minister to lose his own seat.

— Bruce Gillespie, 28 November 2007

Mailing comments: Mailing 236, April 2007

Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer:
QUOZ No 6

This 34-page all-written-by-two-people contribution is one of the wonders of the ANZAPA year.

Claire:

John Foyster is best remembered by ANZAPAs for having, in 1979, just *once* applied the rules strictly. The result: nine members bit the dust in one month. I had been absent for a couple of years, was on the waiting list, and became one of the beneficiaries of The Great Foyster Purge. I haven't dropped out since, although I came close to doing so during the 1980s.

I like those comments about utopias. The twentieth century does prove that utopias should be imagined, not brought into existence.

I like Scotch eggs, which I can buy over the counter in the Myer Food Hall in the Lonsdale Street store. Or did once upon a time. Since the Friday night group stopped meeting in the Myer cafeteria (because they closed down the café around our ears, even while we sitting there), I've rarely entered Myer's.

I had always been told that golden syrup was light treacle — liquid burnt sugar. When we were kids, to us it tasted much the same as honey. Mum explained that golden syrup had no 'goodness', as opposed to honey. Golden syrup was very nice on toasted muffins.

David Suzuki often uses the lily pond analogy to

explain why the economic doctrine of endless growth is a guaranteed failure.

For some reason, I've only recently become aware of the carbon-emitting responsibilities of large aircraft travelling at 30,000 feet. With what do we replace them? Will we revive the Zeppelin? I rather like the idea of slow Zeppelin voyages — but the total carbon emissions required to power all the Zeppelins needed to replace current aerial freight and passenger operations would be about equal to that emitted by all the retired supersonic aircraft. Back to shipping? Likewise, for carbon emissions. I'm sure Elaine could explain it all very clearly, based on her decades-long reading of *New Scientist* every week.

In Melbourne there are very few periods in the year when putting the clothes on the line will not dry them. Many years ago, when we used to have lots of rain in Melbourne during winter, sometimes we would leave clothes out for day after day, hoping for dry clothes. We've never owned or needed a clothes dryer.

Gosh. An espresso machine named after me. *Blush* I wish I could afford an espresso machine. (Brian, a friend of Elaine's, collects espresso machines.)

You mean furry animal fandom has something to do with *sex*? What do furry animal fans actually *do*? No wonder that branch of fandom seems a bit mysterious and icky.

I thought Michael Flanders and Donald Swann disposed of the question of cannibalism way back in the 1950s, with their song telling the sad story of the

cannibal who suddenly decides that eating people is *wrong*. Because of his protest movement, his family and tribe ostrace him. This song, among many others, can be found on the *Complete Flanders and Swann* boxed set, still available.

I like the idea of wearing a double crown . . . if only I didn't hate wearing headgear. This puts my now-shiny noddle in peril every time I step out the door between October and April. (The maximum daily UV index in Melbourne in October is already up to 9, and it reaches 12 most days during the summer.) I have a photo, taken late in his life, of my father wearing a beret. My father's face was always thin, whereas mine is a moonface. No hat can ever improve my appearance, so I perhaps I will buy a beret.

Cat Sparks' story was the best in the *cOck* anthology. I've found in the last year or so that she often has the best story in any Australian anthology or fiction magazine in which she appears. I hope she starts selling fiction overseas soon.

I didn't even know about Steve Irwin until he was interviewed on Andrew Denton's *Enough Rope*. My mother, on the other hand, had actually *met* him at his zoo in Queensland. The Irwin phenomenon is still a mystery to me.

I presume lots of ANZAPAns have already explained that TAFE stands for Technical And Further Education, i.e. non-university tertiary education.

The only thing I know about *Torchwood* is that it didn't do well on Australian free-to-air TV, whereas the revived *Doctor Who* does extremely well.

You failed to get Damien Warman into ANZAPA. He simply did not answer my correspondence.

I get no response from Zara. She promised much a few years ago, but did nothing detectable.

When I was a child I knew the name Dorothy L. Sayers from her radio series *The Man Born to be King*, which retold of the life of Christ. As in all Biblical drama of the time, the top people, such as Christ, the priests and Pontius Pilate, had posh accents, and most of the disciples and the Palestinian general public had Cockney or British regional accents. Because our household was ultra-religious, we thought Dorothy Sayers must be a saintly person, although we knew nothing about her. I knew of the Sayers reputation in crime fiction long before I met Yvonne Rousseau, but of all the readers I know, Yvonne remains the most devoted admirer of the Lord Peter Whimsey series.

I recall a similar Book Disaster when you and various other Acnestis members visited several Carlton second-hand bookshops a couple of days before Aussiecon in 1999. It's impressive to watch such a disaster in progress.

I suspect we have in this house 4000–5000 books that neither of us have read. We must count them again some day. When Elaine and I counted the read/unread books in 1981 or 1982, I had read a quarter of the books and she had read one-fifth. The ratios have probably worsened since then. The ratios would improve if we include the half-wall of books that either of us has edited or indexed during the last thirty years. Very few of them are interesting, or even readable except to specialists, but they could be added to the 'Read Books' list.

I'm glad somebody other than me has finally twigged that Bill Wright can be Bad sometimes. That's when he's not being Saintly.

There are still a lot of good fanzines around, aren't there? And not just the ones on *efanzines.com*. I must write some locs to some of them.

Since Elaine and I work freelance at home, we don't really have weekends. The main difference between week days and weekend days is that (a) on weekends there is no post (I believe you still get a Saturday post); (b) on Saturdays I listen to Brian Wise's *Off the Record*, almost the only radio program that plays the sort of music I like, from 10 a.m. to midday, and to Paul Harris's *Film Buffs' Forecast*, the long-running film fans' program, from midday to 2 p.m.; (c) the newspapers are bigger than on weekdays, so their reading occupies an hour or two; and (d) the phone doesn't ring very often. In the late afternoons we toddle down to Urban Grooves for cake and coffee. If we had real jobs, and hence real incomes, we probably would enjoy our weekends as much as you do.

Mark:

I wouldn't worry about insulting film music composer Dav id Julyan. It's said that the better the film music, the less likely you are to notice it — except for Deeply Ironic soundtracks, such as those for *2001* and *Barry Lyndon*.

Did I say I *wasn't* interested in Roger Sims' report on the Room 770 party? I'm very glad that Roger did write his account for ANZAPA.

My mother also collapsed, but didn't recover. I'm glad that your mother recovered, and I think Roman's did as well (but I'm still catching up my reading of ANZAPA). Roman's father didn't. 2007 is proving fatal to lots of parents, partners and even contemporaries of people in ANZAPA. Let's hope we all scrape over the line into 2008.

From what I've heard about American fandom, Australia needs a Geri Sullivan and a Pat Virzi. We do have Kirstyn McDermott, but after *Continuum 3* she got sick of solving everybody's problems.

All I can do is hum Beatles songs while reading your account of growing up with the Beatles. In 1963 I was sixteen years old. The Beatles snuck up on Australians slowly. 'Love Me Do' did quite well, but it didn't seem remarkable. 'She Loves You' was a lot better. The first warning of what was to come was when we realised that 'She Loves You' was still in the Top 20 nearly nine months after being released.

In 1963, my sisters and I met a bloke called Paul, who had just emigrated with his family from Liverpool. According to him, the Beatles were The Greatest Thing



Ever. He invited us all to a party at his place. He played the first Beatles album all night long. At the end of January 1964, the Beatles arrived in New York, and 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand' was released. It went straight to Number 1 everywhere. Within a month, there were nine new or re-released Beatles songs (including the early Polydor singles) in the US Top Twenty. 'She Loves You' went back to Number 2 in Australia, and stayed in the Top Forty for nearly another year. *With the Beatles*, the second album, sold zillions.

I was never entirely convinced, either by the Beatles or the other Liverpool groups. I liked the fact that they revived many 'classic' (i.e. 1956–1959) rock and roll songs. I liked some of their singles, and hated others. The true revelation came when Paul — the same Paul from Liverpool — lent me, in 1964, the first album by a group called The Rolling Stones. Heaven was revealed; true greatness had arrived. The Stones' fourth album, *Aftermath* (1966), 55 minutes, was the longest pop album of that era.

I keep telling Elaine to install ADSL or broadband, but it's her computer that's connected to the Internet. Someday . . .

I love the movie of *The Green Mile*, but am not tempted to read the book. I did read the novella of 'Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption', then wondered how such bad writing could be transformed into such a great movie (*The Shawshank Redemption*). King is a clunky writer of prose fiction, whereas Frank Darabont is a classy filmmaker when equipped with a good script.

Marc Ortlieb is a Ted Tubb fan, or was when he gave a talk about Tubb to the Nova Mob many years ago. I think the talk appeared in Alan Stewart's *Thyme*.

The plot of *The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer* (finally on DVD), perhaps the best, and certainly the most enjoyable British movie of the seventies, includes a group of British SAS troopers on skis stealing the entire Swiss gold supply with hardly a shot being fired. Perhaps the recent Swiss expedition had the aim of trying to steal Liechtenstein's gold supplies.

I suggested a 'Grumpy Old Fen' panel for Continuum 3 or 4. The idea was taken up at this year's ConVergence, but I could not attend.

The Christmas Letter is still very popular among many of the people to whom I finally-give-in-and-send-Christmas-cards-to. Some of these letters will inevitably appear in ANZAPA. I enjoy them, as often they provide news that the same people would never send by email.

I'm glad *somebody* agrees with me about the very little *Doctor Who* I've seen — the very first eight episodes, plus one episode from each of the second most recent season (Tennant I) and the Eccleston season. People who think *Doctor Who* has any originality haven't read any real SF.

I will not stay in the vicinity of any quiz or quiz-like activity.

Mack Reynolds did have one good line. In an *Analog* story in the early sixties, one of his heroes describes himself as a 'reformed agnostic'. Use that one in your next Census form.

Claire:

What can Mark have against Roxy Music and Blondie? I have all the Blondie albums, remastered, on CD. I have few Roxy Music albums, but thanks to Roger Weddall I heard most of them during the early 1980s. I don't know if there is a Roxy Music/Brian Ferry boxed set — that might be a way of catching up.

In Australia, DJs don't have much choice about what

they play, except on the subscriber/independent stations, such as 3RRR and 3CR. As in America, commercial radio is ruled by playlists, which in turn are pitched at advertisers looking for particular age brackets among listeners. The result is that commercial radio is divided between stations playing current hits (no performers over thirty played) and three golden oldies stations (no music played from after the sixties, or seventies, or eighties). This means that no commercial station plays new music by, say, Bruce Springsteen or Lou Reed, although they may play their 1970s singles and album tracks. Only the independents allow individual presenters to choose their programs. Hence I listen to Brian Wise on 3RRR. His choice of music seems cranky at times, but least his playlist has some resemblance to mine. The same station has specialist country and blues programs. I don't ever listen to 3CR, but I know it also has specialist programming.

The ABC offers freedom to some of its presenters, but its Metropolitan network, the equivalent of the old BBC Light Program, does have a national playlist. Some presenters, such as Derek Guille in Melbourne, attempt to play music they've chosen, but their brief is talk radio (either interviews or talkback). I know that Derek, for instance, is a Loudon Wainwright and Ry Cooder fan, but the only program to play anything from recent Wainwright or Cooder albums has been ABC Radio National's late-night World Music program. It also recently featured Linda Thompson's new CD.

In short, to hear the music I like, I have to keep buying CDs. Which becomes increasingly difficult as my income goes down every year.

I welcome everything you've done for keeping the records of fandom, Claire, but that's still not quite what I meant. Somebody needs to keep a record of the *stories* of fandom, its highlights and legends. A real fandom centres around lively fannish fanzines. In the 1970s, Britain had the RatFandom and Gannet Fandom publications. Dave Langford's fanzines were once very fannish, but these days he doesn't seem to get around anymore. Much of fannish importance appears in *Banana Wings* and other Fishlifter publications. Think of how Arnie and Joyce Katz have put Las Vegas at the centre of the fannish map by continual publication of *Vegas Family Weekly*. There doesn't seem to be an equivalent in Britain today, although it's possible that Pete Weston might finish developing *Prolapse* into a fanzine of current news. (*Prolapse* is very exciting to me, because most of the information in it is news to me — many of the best British fannish fanzines never reached Australia but were distributed only at conventions.)

For more on *A Scanner Darkly*, see *SF Commentary* 80 when finally it hits a letterbox near you.

I presume somebody else has already answered your question about our Science Fiction Foundation. It is based on overflow funds from Aussiecon 2 in 1985. It lends money to conventions as seed capital, and for other fannish projects. Most years, it awards the A. Bertram Chandler Award for lifetime achievement in Australian SF. And it publishes its little fanzine *The Instrumentality* every six months or so.

Did somebody send you a copy of *Kenny*? Can you play DVDs on a zone-free player? *Kenny* is a Zone 4 disc.

Duncan Campbell:
BLOODY BORED STUDENT

It must be a bit offputting if lots of people attending

TAFEs go there only if they don't get a high enough score to enter university. I presume *some* people prefer TAFEs to universities. Also, I had thought TAFE courses were free, or incurred low fees, compared with university fees. After all, who wants a \$100,000 debt hanging over you for the rest of your life? (If Gough Whitlam could abolish university fees, why couldn't the next Labor government? Because it was the Hawke Labor Government that brought back fees and student loans. Bastards.)

I don't know what to say to a TV addict. Give away the TV set for a few weeks. Go cold turkey.

Glen Crawford:
KOBWEBS . . . REINSTATED

The main reason why I'm reluctant to buy a new computer is because this Gateway, which I've had for eight years, has so far proved totally reliable. (The hard disk could die tomorrow, but it hasn't yet.) Many friends who have bought a computer recently seem to have incurred dreadful problems within a year or two of first purchase. Someday I will be forced to move away from a Windows 98 system.

Thank you, LynC, for keeping in touch with you, Glen.

Sorry about the lack of success in the screenwriting biz. But you're right: the problem with the Australian film industry is still the cowardice of private investors. Australia is supposed to be awash with millionaires, but none of them is willing to put \$5 million or \$10 million into a good commercial film. So an investor loses on several films in a row. Eventually one investment has to pay off.

Congratulations on trying to get *The Red Chief* made into a film. That must have been the first adult book (i.e. not intended for a children's audience) that I read, in the holidays at the end of Grade 3, when I was eight years old. I loved the character of the chief himself, but more importantly I loved the concept of Australia divided into 'countries' (Aboriginal tribal areas) for those thousands of years before Europeans arrived here. Because of reading *The Red Chief*, I always knew that concept of *terra nullius* is a furphy — that this is and always remain the land of the people who inhabited it for aeons.

I've never run across *Madman's Island*. Sounds great. *Lasseter's Last Ride* also has great psychological insight, and illustrates Idriess's belief that Lasseter did find that gold reef. All the Idriess books used to be in print, but probably most of them can now be found now only in the dustier secondhand shops. My mother gave away the Idriess books we used to own, but I've bought a recent paperback reprint of *The Red Chief*.

I was forced to watch and participate in team sports at school, which is why I still detest them. The most boring day of the year was the school's Annual Sports Day. Since I had no ability at running, jumping or even standing still, I had to fidget in the sun (there was never any shade) for the whole day until somebody announced that Gold House, or Blue House, or whatever, had won The Cup for the day. I did not have any compensatory sporting abilities, such as an ability to swim or surf, but I still love swimming in seawater occasionally (once every ten years).

If Elaine and I had had children, we might have had children who loved sport! Horrifying thought.

I have no ability at dealing with machines of any kind, let alone cars. Yet you show how enjoyable it would be to dismantle a car.

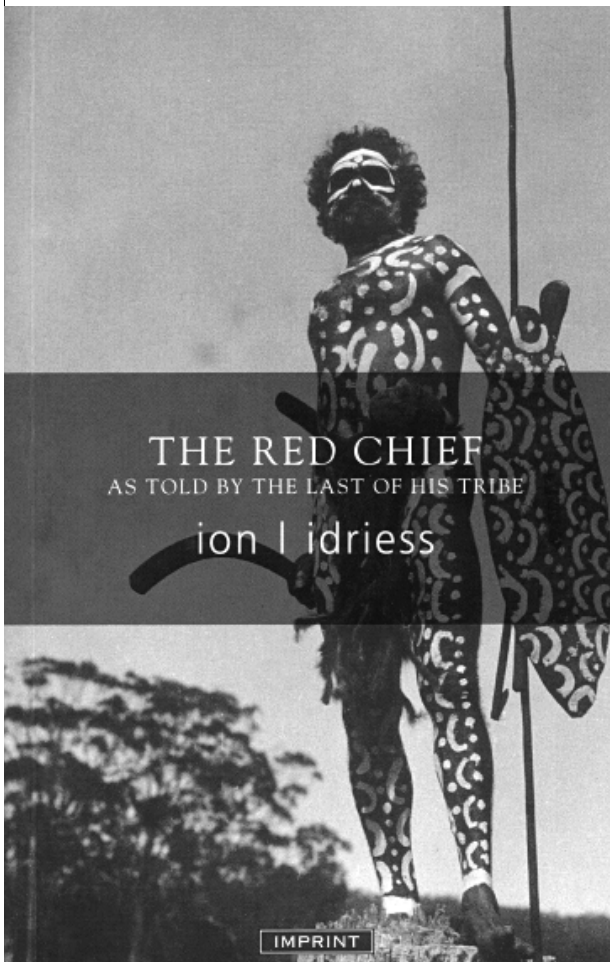
Garry P. Dalrymple:
TRANSCENDENTAL BASENJIS, SERMONS AND
ENLIGHTENMENT No 23

Your objections to holding a proper convention are ludicrous. If you had attended any of the four Continuums in Melbourne, you would have seen how a wide variety of material and interests can be combined into a seamless convention that leaves most people satisfied most of the time. Don't reinvent the wheel; ask the people who have built up a real convention expertise: the continuing but ever-changing Continuum committee, or the ConVergence/2010 Worldcon team. Aim now to bid to hold a national convention.

I agree with your comment to Sally: to judge from the way the WorkPlace agreements have been applied, most bosses in Australia are sociopaths of the kind she has been describing. There are exceptions: when I was working freelance-but-regularly for Macmillan, my boss was Brian McCurdy, the bloke whose obituary I ran here in 2005. If everybody had a boss like him, it wouldn't matter which industrial system was being used. My theory is that every employee in every workplace in Australia holds John Howard personally responsible for every insult, personal and financial, unleashed by every bad boss in the country.

I've been approached by only one beggar in Greensborough during three years of living here. When I return to the mean streets of Fitzroy and Collingwood, I'm accosted by the same beggars roam who roamed there six and ten years ago.

I have a vivid memory of nearly passing out during



the only time I gave blood, way back in 1972. Elaine, who has won a citation for blood-giving, cannot understand my cowardice in the face of medical procedures. And yes, I should try again (shudder!)

Election campaigning? You really enjoy self-punishment, especially as you never had a chance of winning. As part of a campaign to re-start Neighbourhood Watch in my area, a friend and I letter-boxed every address in our small section of Collingwood. It took several hours to cover about a thousand letterboxes. I can understand why you were able to reach only a few thousand voters in a suburban electorate such as Lakemba.

From your notes, I can't grasp what happened during the 'Science Fiction Is the New Black' debate. To judge from the title, the discussion should have centred on fashion. Obviously science fiction is not fashionable; it hardly sells. Fantasy is fashionable, so the topic should have been: 'That Fantasy is the New Black'. I would have thought a top publisher should have been on the panel, as well as somebody from publishing marketing. Such people should know why people are reading what they are reading. To judge from your notes, none of the speakers got stuck into any of the real issues suggested by the topic.

Best SF Books: I hadn't read any of them; hadn't even heard of most of them. I should have read Simmons' *Hyperion* years ago, but haven't, because it's just too thick. Elaine enjoyed it.

Karen Gory

LAST MINUTE MUSINGS

Do we have Blockbuster Online in Australia? I haven't heard of it. It's not part of the cable service, anyway. Surely any Australian who tried to download from the US Blockbuster would be refused entry.

I thought *The Prestige* was great because it is about deadly obsessions. Nothing wimpy here. Great acting; superb photography; and the adaptation of Chris Priest's book works well.

Of your list, the movies I also saw, and liked, are *A Scanner Darkly*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, *A Prairie Home Companion*, *Curse of the Were Rabbit*, *The Night Listener* (Robin Williams is great, but Toni Collette's performance is extraordinary), *Lemony Snicket*, *Hollywoodland*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Children of Men*, *Stranger than Fiction* and *The Illusionist*. I even agree with most of your ratings. It's been a pretty good couple of years for movies, although most recent offerings in the cinemas sound dire.

Michael Green

BOOKMARK No 6

I have no eye for cars, but even I might notice that hot rod if it passed me in the street.

You, John and Frank keep talking about the brilliance of Wendy Rule, but I've still never heard her on the radio, and nobody has ever shoved a copy of her CD into my hand. She's still just a name to me.

We've saved a fortune in vet's bills by having the cats confined to the cat enclosure at the back. They would really love to fight neighbour cats Victor and Puss, but have to be content to watch them flounce past the window.

Always appreciate a cat photo. Thanks for Embers Photo No 3.

David Grigg

MEGATHERIUMS FOR BREAKFAST No 49

By most people's standards, I've been semi-retired since 1973, with odd stints of working in people's offices (but never full time). I've never felt even slightly guilty about working at home. Most of that time I've worked, again by other people's standards, part time, even while working like hell to meet some deadline or other.

Not so now. I'm forcibly pretty-much-retired, and working on various fanzine projects. It would be nice to be wanted — by people who pay me money by the hour. But it's nice not to feel tired all day, as I do when working on a long project on the computer.

The main difference between my schedule and yours is that I do not get up at 6.30, but usually about 7.45. Elaine has worked out a schedule by which I wash the previous day's dishes, then feed the cats. By then it is time to check the incoming emails, which usually takes an hour. Usually I do not take the walk that I always promise myself. At 10 a.m. I switch on Ramona Koval's books program on Radio National. If the topic is interesting, I keep listening to 11 a.m. If it isn't, I finally swiggle around on my seat, decide I can't put off starting work any longer, and Do Something.

An interruption to the day is my afternoon nap, which most days I can't do without. Most days the nearest I get to a walk is the expedition to the local shopping plaza and back again. Since I am in continuous slow walking motion for an hour, I count it as a walk. All of which means that often I don't really get stuck into work until about 3 p.m. This is okay if we're not going out at night, such as to a dinner or a Nova Mob meeting. If we do, we usually have to leave before 5 p.m. to catch the train to wherever we're going.

For me, 'working at home' is enjoyable, but not very efficient. Since nobody is ever likely to ask me to take on a nine-to-five job, that routine is likely to remain.

Elaine's routine is similar to mine, without the afternoon snooze. Until now she has had regular paying work as a maths/science freelance editor. For the first time in many years, she is not booked up for six months ahead. For more than a month she had nothing on the plate, although a new maths book is promised in December. She works more efficiently than I do. Her rest break to digging, weeding, repotting or doing other things in the garden. 'Digging is what keeps me sane,' as she named her gardening fanzine. Both of us usually work after dinner, except for the rare occasion when something on TV is worth watching.

I hadn't heard about the 'Transition to Retirement' scheme. Perhaps that would solve our current financial stress. At the moment we are both living on savings.

I could say that I feel poor and unwanted, but it wouldn't be true. Because of some clever decisions made by Elaine many years ago (especially, buying the block next door in Collingwood from her father's inheritance), we were able to sell well in Collingwood and buy well here. If it were not for the costs of sitting in the house — telephone, gas, electricity, insurance and rates — we could live very cheaply. We're feeling insecure rather than despondent. That will come later, when we actually run out of money.

If you don't adopt a cat, a cat will always adopt you. Guard Cat doesn't sound like the sort of cat we would like to have at our place, but shows lots of Catty Character.

Woodstock is still the best-made rock movie, especially for the big screen. Most rock movies are merely

concerts, but Neil Young's *Heart of Gold* (a documentary featuring long sections of two different concerts) has an extra dimension: it's a mini-autobiography, comprised of Neil Young's stage patter. Lovely film, worth buying on DVD.

Why would I put my collection on iPod? I'm certainly not going to ruin a long walk by listening to crappy MP3-quality music. Thanks to Elaine, I've become much more aware of the variety of birdsong around our area. Listening to music through headphones gives me a headache.

The Separation was my favourite novel in the year I read it. I haven't read the others on your list. *The Prestige*, *American Splendor* and *Donnie Darko* are among my favourite movies of recent years, with *Donnie Darko* one of the few modern (post 1960s) movies I can watch over and over again.

Jack Herman

NECESSITY 75: SUCCEED ON BROADWAY

This time I don't know your title reference. Not a song that I've ever heard on radio.

You give the impression of being a person who meets lots of other people in course of your job. So, why did the general public swing from its idiotic faith in Howard last time (he would have won, even if Latham had not shot Labor in the foot) to its seeming contempt for Howard this time? I'd appreciate your analysis of the swing.

A nice analysis of the David Hicks situation, and, as I've noted before about your ANZAPA politics pieces, more an article for a general magazine than a fanzine. You should try selling your analytical think pieces to *The Monthly*, the only remaining magazine in Australia with readable, informative journalism.

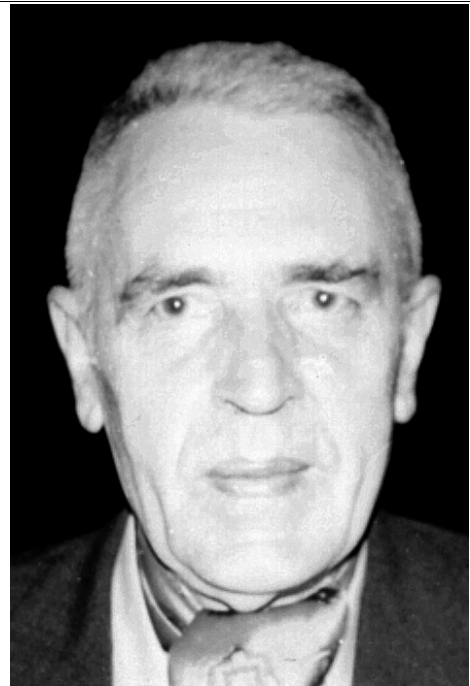
Thanks for the reminder about the Fortieth. It won't be a convention, though. I'll just book somewhere affordable near the city, if such a restaurant still exists, and send out invitations to as many members and ex-members as I can recall. A real convention would attract more interstaters than a dinner, but I know Perry Middlemiss lost money on the most recent Anzapacon. I don't have any money to lose.

Thanks for the reminder of why I did *not* set up MUSFA at Melbourne University, but left it to David Grigg to do so in 1969, the year after I graduated. I was too paralytically shy to speak to people, let alone organise them. The first generation of articulate, well-organised students were those who made MUSFA great during the mid 1970s: James Campbell (our Duncan's father), Dennis Callegari, Alan Wilson, Frank Payne, Roger Weddall, Elaine Cochrane, and many others.

I would love to get hold of a copy of Alan Sherman's track 'You Gotta Have Skin (to Keep Your Insides In)'. It wasn't on the only *Best of Alan Sherman* that's ever appeared on CD. Moshe Feder sent me a copy of the lyrics of 'You Gotta Have Skin', but it would be much more enjoyable to hear it again. Even 'Hello Muddah Hello Faddah' sounds fresh after all these years.

Thanks for the Chandler reminiscence. The last time I saw him was a dinner that Sally and John organised for Art Widner the first time he visited Australia (1979? 1980?). As I remember, Art, Bert, George Turner, John Bangsund, Sally Yeoland, Wynne Whiteford, Gwayne Naug, and Elaine and I were at the same table.

Garry might never have seen *Kelly Country*. As I remember, Penguin Australia published the only edi-



A. Bertram Chandler — Bert Chandler to his Australian friends, Jack Chandler to his British and American friends — at Aussiecon 1, August 1975. (Photo: Helena Binns.)

tion, hoping to sell it on to America. But I don't think Ace, Bert's usual American publisher, wanted it. *Kelly Country* might still be available in secondhand shops.

Thanks for the note about LACON II's treatment of fan fund winners. By contrast, Aussiecon III in 1999 treated the fan fund winners as *ex officio* guests of honour, with a free room each.

Thanks for the reminder to go looking for Joe Queenan's reviews on the Web. I own quite a few of his books, so should have realised that he reviewed films regularly.

'Fan Writers of America' was never an organisation. All a prospective member has to do is nominate him- or herself as a 'member fwa'. Therefore you need to know already what the initials stand for. It's the modern equivalent of the secret handshake, which Ted White often mentions.

I thought Renee Zellweger did a pretty good British accent in *Bridget Jones*, where she reminded me of Claire Brialey, in the nicest possible way. Her great role, though, was as Robert E. Howard's never-quite-girl-friend in *The Whole Wide World*. Now *there* is a movie I can watch over and over. Vincent d'Onofrio's best role is as Robert Howard.

The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer, finally available on DVD, nicely demolishes the idea of real democracy in a modern society.

I agree with your review of *Stranger than Fiction*. I was thinking it was the best movie of the year until I saw *Breach*. I still haven't seen *Monster's Ball*, although Dick Jensen has sent it to me.

I enjoyed *The Illusionist* greatly, because I realised that the main character is Uhl (Paul Giamatti); it's *his* viewpoint. I enjoyed Ed Norton's performance: just right for someone seeking cold revenge.

Did *Tallegda Nights* get a cinema release? I kept watching out for it because of advance reviews, but it didn't seem to appear here.

I don't know the books of several of your films-are-better candidates. *Being There* is certainly better than the book, and I rate Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging*

Rock as as-good-as-but-different. By far the best adaptation of a film from a book is Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard*, which converts a rather narrow, if superbly written, Flaubertian narrative into a mighty epic without changing anything in the story.

Eric Lindsay
GENERIC APA ZINE 2

People who believe the economics matters tend to be 'greenhouse sceptics'. Many other people worry more about problems that affect everybody equally, such as the greenhouse gas problem. Any action taken to maintain a balance in Earth's climate are going to be more economically responsible than any action that does not. Nobody can make much money if all the assumptions upon which today's economics are based change rapidly.

Anybody who calls himself a 'greenhouse sceptic' today simply doesn't read the scientific literature (especially the summary magazines, such as *New Scientist*) or listen to the ABC's *Science Show* (for instance). Such people, a small part of the scientific community, have put their heads in the sand and won't take them out until their tails are burnt off or rising sea levels drown them.

Carbon dioxide percentages in the atmosphere are rising because humans have been treating the atmosphere as a vast dunny-can since the beginning of the industrial era. We're drowning in our own shit, and so is the rest of life on earth. So is carbon dioxide the main element of this shit? I presume so. Now I'll go back and read your article . . .

All of the alternative energy sources will of course become much more effective when real money is flung at them. That's why all your doubts about wind power, wave power and solar power seem silly. Since we must stop using renewable fossil sources for energy, we must find out how to use renewable resources, so we will.

Oil has risen to \$US97 per barrel since you wrote your article. Looks as if oil shortages, actual or artificially induced, are already with us.

I will never have the money to buy a car, but even if I did, I wouldn't buy anything other than an electric car. The private car is just a way of shoving shit into the atmosphere. If I were world dictator, the first thing I would do would be to ban petrol-powered motor vehicles — a decade or so after building the public transport to move everybody around . . .

I've reached the end of your essay. I love your disaster scenario. It's exactly what's going to happen within twenty or thirty years if carbon dioxide rates continue to increase, so we agree after all. Just shows that SF fans, with their Jiant Minds, usually agree in the end.

Jean Weber
JEANZINE 2007-1

I'd forgotten how quickly prop jets dropped out of service. If I remember correctly, the Australian airlines Ansett and TAA converted to all-jet fleets only in the early seventies. Meanwhile, Jumbo jets had been introduced on international routes, although the only one I travelled in was between New York and London in early January 1974.

Thanks for the photos of Poland and your commentary. Not a lot I can say, as I haven't been to Poland and probably won't get there.

I hope everybody reads your advertisement for *Tiger Daze!* and buys it. It is one of the few enjoyable books I've edited in recent years. I was very grateful for this bit of freelance work, which came along when I hadn't had any work for months. If only the major publishers would follow your example.

LynC
FROM THE LAIR OF THE LYNX No 40

Your workload sounds like another example of Howard's World, and why people are sick to death of 'WorkChoices' or anything resembling them. Howard wanted every employer to be an ogre smashing people's heads in; the voters have returned the favour.

I didn't realise how much worse secondary schools have got than any in 1969 and 1970 (when I was treading the corridors). It's a wonder anybody stays in teaching.

It's hard to tell what's fashionable in men's and boys' haircuts these days. Men my age keep their hair as short as possible, but I see a lot of variety in the hairstyles of schoolkids getting on the train to Greensborough. Some have long hair, just like the Beatles-Rolling Stones styles that got us into trouble forty years ago. Some have the short haircuts of their elders, but many have haircuts that have obviously been styled by a hairdresser. Forty years ago no teenage boy could have got with signs of personal vanity.

Estelle Newall:
ANIMANGA

You've certainly improved your magazine-making skills since the first time you were here, Estelle. It took me until I was forty to publish a magazine that looked anywhere near as good as this. (I know we didn't have the computer equipment to publish magazines this way until I was forty, but it took me awhile to learn those skills.)

I don't know anything about *manga*, apart from the Miyazaki animated films from Ghibli studios. I assume they form a tiny percentage of the films that are around. I know nothing about the *manga* books. I'll just have to try to pick up a bit of information from reading your magazine.

For instance, what is *pokemon*? I keep hearing the word, but nobody has yet told me what it means.

I can't try your mango cream smoothie because I'm allergic to mangoes — but keep the recipes coming.

Dan McCarthy:
PANOPTICON No 41

Like a lot of people, including Bill Wright, I really hoped you would win this year's poll, Dan. But I didn't get to vote. There's always next year . . . and we won't be able to vote for Bill in 2008.

You give the impression that there is no strong SF group in Dunedin. If there were some people who could drop around, surely you wouldn't feel isolated? But that assumes that such a group has an interesting social calendar.

Thanks for the nice bit of Lewis Carroll. Despite hearing a superb Nova Mob talk on Carroll by Marc Ortlieb, I've never explored the non-Alice books.

I like steam locomotives, but I've never learned any-

thing about their technicalities. I've also never come across a simple book that might show me what the locomotive terms mean.

So is *Jeff Hawke* a British, American or New Zealand strip? I've never come across it here.

I don't ever buy graphic novels, so *Sandman* is just a name to me. Hence, the name Neil Gaiman does not set my heart aqiver, as it seems to for many Melbourne fans. (Hence the huge crowd that turned up for Continuum 3, where Gaiman was a guest of honour.)

I can't understand how anybody does business in Dunedin if toner cartridges take three months to be delivered. The people at our stationer, Angleton's of Fitzroy, pride themselves on the speed with which they can locate stock and deliver it to the customer. They thought they would be threatened by a giant Officeworks store when it opened up the top of Smith Street, but instead found that their own business expanded greatly.

Your report about Christina's health is familiar. Every time that Elaine visits her Auntie Vaisey, the only theme of Vaisey's conversation is 'coming home'. For her, 'home' is now the house she left fifty years ago. She seems to retain no memory of the unit where she spent the last fifteen years of her life before going into the aged-care home.

Thanks for the information about life drawing. The last time I did much drawing was in early secondary school. I suspect I didn't succeed because I didn't realise that complicated shapes could be built up from much simpler shapes. Perhaps I should try again.

There are, I'm told, some free PDF creators on the Internet. Since Adobe Acrobat does not really improve with new editions, there doesn't seem much point in spending a small fortune to buy it.

Another great, fully restored Art Deco railway station is Union Station, the main station in Los Angeles. Walking through the giant entrance is like walking through a small Art Deco museum.

What does the death of Aotearapa say about the state of NZ fandom generally? Probably nothing at all, as here. Most Australian fans would rather cut off their hands than produce a paper fanzine; they now occupy some other universe.

The other day, Robyn Williams, the ABC broadcaster who introduced Fred Dagg to Australia, played a very early Fred Dagg sketch. John Clarke's voice has changed greatly since then; he's become a real actor rather than merely a writer and deliver of radio comedy sketches. Recently I saw *Death in Brunswick*, co-starring Clarke and Sam Neill. It's just been released on DVD. It's typical that one of the very best Australian films should have starred three New Zealanders.

Jeanne Mealy:

LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

It wouldn't take much of a shift in the direction and temperature of the Gulf Stream to give the folk of the French Riviera the same winter temperatures as those of St Paul. After St Tropez and Cannes receive their first Minnesota winter, people might stop being 'climate change sceptics'.

If you had had the equivalent of our winter, you would have the minus-12s and whatever, but almost no snow for the winter. We did get a fortnight of rain in June, but that's been the only decent rain for most of this year.

When John received that brick for his 50th, he must have thought you were trying to pack him off to the

Tucker Hotel. (Now is the era when lots of trufen need a friendly, fannish retirement home.)

See my comments elsewhere about our new cat Archie. We wish Ebony a long, trouble-free life.

The devastating effects of your 1894 bushfire sounds very like the results of two enormous Victorian bushfires of the 1890s, and in 1939. During both of those outbreaks, which burnt through most of the state's forest, people had almost no means of communication, and little fast transport. The most extensive Victorian bushfires ever were last summer, but almost nobody was killed. The bushfires were confined to national parks and other unsettled areas.

Thank *you*, Jeanne, for herding the fans for the LACon ANZAPA photo.

One nice aspect of London is that you can always find your way around even if you don't know where you are going. If you are carrying a map of the London Underground, sooner or later you will find an Underground station. 'That's where I am,' you say to yourself, as you work out where your destination might be.

Yes, I like that aspect of Garrison Keillor's stories of Lake Wobegon: the whole audience waits to see whether he can tie the ends together. Sometimes he doesn't, and doesn't bother. Some of the recent ones we've heard in Melbourne (we're running six months behind the American show, although nobody has explained why) are nearly as effective as the early Wobegon stories.

Kenny doesn't feature slang so much as genuinely creative new expressions. It's a great script.

Order at least two or three copies of *Tiger Daze*. If Jean publishes Lyn's next book, I might get to edit it. It was good fun editing *Tiger Daze*.

Elaine is good at relocating spiders. You don't have to kill them. Get a wide-mouthed glass. Place the glass over the spider (assuming its leg span is not vast). Take a piece of firm cardboard of thick paper and insert it between the top of the glass and the wall. Take the piece of paper, the glass, and the spider out in the bushes. Let the spider go, making sure it doesn't jump back onto you.

Australians like to think that the 'Aussie ambience' is mateship, people being relaxed with each other, people being able to give and take jokes at each other's expense — in other words, a refusal to get uptight or worry about anything important. I've always found this ritual mateship conformist and restrictive, which is probably why I've worked at home for most of the last 34 years. Also, it has a violent side, nicely illustrated in *Noise*, a brilliant Melbourne-made film I saw last night on DVD. Both males and females tend to use uneasy jokes as weapons: 'If you can't take a joke, mate, I'll whop you one.' But English migrants in particular say we Australians are nice and relaxed, so I suppose we must be.

John Newman:

PING!

Your tank horror experience is a reminder of how fortunate we have been in the tradesmen we've employed during the last three years. We haven't had anybody roll up (yet) who had no idea how to do the job. We have been lucky, in that our friend Harjinder has supervised everything we've done to the house.

Digital video recorder is where I would go next, provided I have the money when the current DVD player fails. I still use the video recorder to time-shift programs,

but only occasionally. Dick Jenssen DVD-recorded recent episodes of *Wire in the Blood* and *Rebus* for me; but there are long stretches of the year when there are no programs worth watching or time-shifting.

Read Barry Heard's *Well Done, Those Men*, which tells of the ghastly things that happened to the blokes whose numbers were pulled out of a hat. Mine wasn't. As Heard describes basic training of Vietnam conscripts, I wouldn't have survived the first day. The chapters that tell of the actual Vietnam experience are almost too confronting to read. One of the few recent Australian books that every Australian should read.

Roman Orszanski:
FURTHER ADVENTURES OF AN INCURABLE
ROMANTIC No 4

Several people have told me about the uncanny effect of walking along Adelaide streets with you, only to be stopped every few metres by cries of 'Roman!' from Orszanski groupies. This makes for slow progress. The 'Roman Orszanski effect' seems to work in Melbourne as well. By contrast, I can perambulate around Melbourne at great speed, confident that I will rarely be greeted in the street.

Thanks for attending my party in February. I had thought you might be one of the few interstateers who would actually turn up if I invited you. Maybe I should have invited some Seattlites, such as Alan and Janice, or Jerry and Suzle.

I had heard that some people were served late at the birthday dinner, but that's the first I had heard about the Justin steak. Yet again, I'm glad I didn't invite more than 50 people, although that now means that almost everybody in Melbourne fandom now thinks I dropped them from the list.

I've never been to WomAdelaide because I've never been able to afford to go. Also, I've rarely heard of more than a handful of the headliners. If ever I did go and attend quite a few of the concerts, I'm sure I would enjoy them. That's a multitude of ifs.

Cath Ortlieb:
YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HOME WHEN
YOU FIND A WOMBAT IN YOUR BED No 110

I didn't give that talk on the connection between Philip K. Dick and Enid Blyton. I've been toying with the idea for years, and mentioned it during one of the panels at Continuum 4. I was on eight panels during Continuum 4, so I cannot remember what I said when. Probably I said it during the 'Guilty Pleasures' panel, held at the unbelievable time of 11 p.m. Because that was the only panel featuring all four guests of honour, it was well attended, even at that hour. The tradition of room parties seems to have faded at Melbourne conventions, so people are now willing to attend program items at any hour. At the next Continuum, begin an item at midnight, and call it 'All-night party'.

Spike Parsons:
THE UNFORTUNATE RHINOS
I-94

I don't get your point about privacy. Several people have asked me not to print their email addresses in fanzines

that are posted on efanazines.com. That is reasonable, because of the risk of receiving a huge increase in spam mail. But since few fans send paper fanzines anymore, and only a few send real letters, posting a snail mail address, even in the efanazines version of a fanzine, shouldn't have repercussions. The trouble with the blogosphere is that most participants don't care about other people's postings; they only care about their own. The aim of LiveJournal and other blog suppliers seems to me to prevent communication, not improve it. I feel that you might be leaving something unsaid — for instance, have you been in some way stalked through the Internet? That would be very upsetting, even life-changing.

Thanks for *I-94*. Personalised number plates were introduced in Victoria about ten years ago. It tells a lot about Victorians that one does not often see a personalised licence plate. Perhaps they are too expensive. Or perhaps my inability to appreciate cars means that I never actually see any car, except as an object to avoid while scurrying across the street. I don't look at licence plates.

I never rode in Spike 9. Maybe I'm the only international visitor to San Francisco who has never travelled in her. I still feel I haven't seen much of San Francisco, but I did get to see a fair bit of the country north of the city, thanks to Art, Marci and Robert. At least I got to see Seattle, and even a fair bit of Los Angeles.

So what did you trade in Spike9 for? The regular readers of *I-94* obviously know the end of this story, whereas we in ANZAPA don't.

Alan Stewart:
YTTERBIUM No 80

Look at the list of Tim Tam ingredients and you know why I went cold turkey on them. Elaine and I became addicted Tim Tams when both of us were fully employed with freelance work at Collingwood. The petrol station-food shop across Wellington Street stayed open to midnight. At 11 p.m. we would be trying to finish some job to hit a deadline next day. We knew we would be up to 2 a.m. One of us would dash across the road to grab some packets of Tim Tams so we could finish our jobs. We were able to kick the addiction because in Greensborough milk bars and other little food shops don't exist. Neither of us is willing to traipse around to the Safeway for Tim Tams at 10 p.m.

Thanks for the 1994 photo of Bob and Fern Tucker. Tucker doesn't look much older in that photo than when I visited in 1973. Fern was a lot younger than Bob, so she must have still been in her early forties in 1973. That Fern died first must have really knocked the spirit out of Tucker during his final year.

The only book on your list that I've read is Christopher Priest's *The Prestige*. I must return to it now that I've seen the film.

I don't read parodies. I receive quite a few as review copies. All I find is prose so laboured that I give up any hope of finding humour. (Dave Langford's book about Harry Potter could well be an exception, but I'll need to read books 2 to 6 of the series before I can read his *The Death of Harry Potter*.)

I've seen only two of your movies list: *A Scanner Darkly* and *The Prestige*, but I have seen the three Miss Marple films you have on your TV list. These days, the Christie adaptations are as expensive and handsome as major cinema releases.

Bill Wright:
INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP

Doesn't Dick Jenssen have fun concocting those covers! This one is a doozy. Dick finds himself 'immersed in a matrix of evocations', and so do I, without realising it. Most of my strongest evocations are brought forth by scraps of music, rather than books or films. In the field of literature, I pat myself on the back and say that I always look forward, trying to find new treasures rather than dig up old ones. However, I find it increasingly difficult to find new treasures, especially among novels. And I suspect my 'bad dreams' don't take me back along the paths that Dick describes.

Dennis is in good form. Since I have no ability to write clerihews, I haven't any replies to his.

I had heard vague mentions of the name 'E. Phillips Oppenheim', but knew nothing about him. His books, like those of many very popular writers of the early twentieth century, seem to have disappeared. *Trilby*, by George du Maurier, is said to be the biggest selling novel ever, and is probably the only pre-World War I bestseller still occasionally reprinted. Of your list on pp. 7-8, the only one I've heard of is *Introducing the Toff*, which I seem to remember was in the Oakleigh High School library. When you consider that the 'Toff' is obviously a copy of 'the Saint', it seems odd that none of Leslie Charteris's Saint novels features in your list. Nor does *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (Baroness Orczy), which does stay in print.

Thanks for the reminder of Garry Kilworth's visit, Bill — and the biography. He and his wife were great company. I haven't heard anything from either of them since they returned to Britain, but I assume they are okay.

Stefan's 'Sleep Debt' piece is a clever sendup of 'carbon debt'. Stefan should go far, but he won't, unless he sends his pieces to publications other than the super-secret *IRS*.

I'm intrigued that the 'business lunch' still operates as it did during the seventies and eighties, before Keating took the tax concession away. I had assumed that businesspersons now eat their sandwiches at the desk, then gulp down a cup of tea or coffee and begin work exactly fifteen minutes later. How do businesspersons justify today's business lunches if they can't claim restaurant meals on their tax return?

Please ask Stefan to list some worst examples (that he knows) of 'Best of' albums that are actually 'Unrecognisable Remixes of Best of' albums. The only one I know of was a Best of Dire Straits album from a few years ago, whose recording engineers remastered it beyond-the-bounds-of-reasonable-resurrection.

Claire and Mark must have assumed that I was the only ANZAPA member much interested in the nominees for the Arthur Clarke Award. They should have dedicated this mailing's *Quoz* to Justin Ackroyd, the only person in Australia who had actually read them all.

John Foyster was known to say that a trugid novel was one written by George Truner.

I cannot see how the Theatre of Memory confers improved memory on anybody. How does one remember the layout of the Theatre of Memory?

Thanks for the explanation of the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony. It all seemed incomprehensible at the time, but looked wonderful. I didn't watch any events of the Games, but Elaine insisted that we

watch the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. The latter was fairly uninteresting, as I remember.

Thanks for the ballet report.

Sally Yeoland:
LES CHATTES PARTIES No 88

John's health has improved so greatly (I am told) since March that I needed to be reminded, by your account, of just how frightening his health difficulties had been. Vivid reporting.

And your health wasn't the best, either. No wonder, after all the worrying you've had to do. I like that message from your doctor that you should 'make some time each day to do whatever things [you] really enjoy doing, and not what [you] think [you] should be doing'. I won't claim to be stressed by involuntary retirement, but I do feel impelled to do things I *should* be doing, rather than things I have waited years to do when some free time became available. The free time has arrived, but I'm clunking through these mailing comments, when I would rather be publishing the next issue of *SF Commentary*. I really wish I could let myself sit down and listen to a few symphonies without hearing that voice at the back of my mind telling me to *do* something. Childhood training never lets a person run free.

Thanks for your account of visiting the auction of John's old flat. As you say — how will anybody be able to afford rent in the future? Already nobody can afford to buy a house without having one to sell first.

Thanks very much for your account of attending my mother's funeral. I hope Elaine and I conveyed to you how much we appreciated your taking the trouble to go to Tootgarook with us and Grant. I suspect my mother changed very little after 1989 (my father's funeral), except to become thinner and shorter.

Sorry about the lack of early-morning eateries in Greensborough. It's also impossible to get anything to eat after 10 p.m. It's a pity that the American-style twenty-four-hour suburban diner has never become established in Australia. Also, sorry that it was such a *long* day for you. We rarely regret not owning a car, but it would have been useful during the month my mother was dying, and on the day of the funeral.

I suspect that cheaper restaurants and cafés can no longer afford rents in the city. Fortunately, we've discovered Oriental Bistro, on the corner of Exhibition and Little Bourke Streets, opposite Rydges. Best Chinese food we've tasted for awhile, and still affordable. We hope we haven't doomed the place by discovering it. That's what happened after we discovered Thai City.

Thanks for the reminder to check out the Eastern Inn site. These days, when we want to hit the inner suburbs, we get off the train at Westgarth (last station before Clifton Hill). The High Street tram is close to the station, so we take that into Collingwood, but don't bother stopping in Clifton Hill. If we want to go directly to Carlton, we take the bus that goes past the station, then comes down Rathdowne Street.

The only time I visited the original Mary Martin Bookshop in Adelaide (1972), Max Harris could be dimly perceived sitting in an office off the main shop.

Mailing Comments: Mailing 237, June 2007

Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer:
QUOZ No 7

Claire:

I've had a copy of *The Dictionary of the Khazars* since it was published. Unfortunately my desire to possess adventurous and eccentric books was greater than my desire to take them from the shelf and read them. Hence I still have a lot of tantalising books such as Pavic's sitting on the shelf. The only one I ever sold because I knew I would never read it is Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. I bought it in the mid seventies, the week it was published.

Elaine did not accept an invitation to join me on the BBB Fund trip because she knew how difficult it would be to put everything on hold. The bill for boarding the cats would have been a fair percentage of the plane fare that Alan and Janice were willing to pay so that Elaine could do the trip. We had so much trouble redirecting bills and mail when we moved to Greensborough that we recoiled at the thought of persuading the local post office to hold mail for one month. A neighbour on one side is very old, and the neighbour on the other side has two jobs, so he's rarely home — we didn't want to burden either with the job of making our house look occupied by removing the daily forest of junk mail.

I know nothing about Chris O'Shea, JETS winner. (But I knew nothing about Ang Rosin before the GUFF race.)

Lists! lists! — but this time about travel, so perhaps I'm not so interested in these lists. Of your 'Places to which I have been', I've been to only one, the Sydney Opera House. I have been to a very concrete-and-glass art gallery on the south side of the Thames (in 1973) with John Brosnan to see a Munch exhibition. Would that have been the Tate?

Of your 'Places I would like to visit', I have visited, much too briefly, the Metropolitan, the Smithsonian, the Empire State Building, Fishermen's Wharf (don't bother!), Golden Gate area (do bother), the Space Needle in Seattle, and Times Square (it didn't look much in 1973, but I'm told it's been done up, like everything else in New York). The place on your list I would most like to visit is 'Eastern and northern isles, Scotland, UK'.

Your third list is fanciful, because the whole problem with travel is (a) the sheer pain of getting there, and (b) being able to afford to get there, stay there, and return. Also, I get headaches from gawking at places. I would enjoy a tour of the great restaurants of the world, provided somebody else pays the bills.

I haven't thought much about 'Places I don't really want to visit at all'. I could list lots of places that have suddenly become much more dangerous since 2001. I would love to tour Afghanistan in a couple of centuries time, when it settles down a bit — but not now. I would love to have toured the museums of Baghdad — before they were looted. I don't want to visit tropical countries. I can't stand heat, although it doesn't afflict me as badly as it does you.

Where would I would love to visit, ignoring the factors of expense and inconvenience? Iceland, first. Then the Scottish islands. Then Scandinavia, throwing in Finland

and the Baltic countries. Then the accessible parts of Canada. All the places I missed in Britain, but in late summer or autumn. All the bits of USA that contain interesting fans, but which I haven't seen yet. France, Germany, Austria, etc., provided I'm not accompanied by somebody who wants to look only at historical sites. St Petersburg, but perhaps not too many other places in Russia. I would like to wait a century or two until Russia finally gets organised.

As you say, I would want to travel with interesting friends, preferably book-seeking fans, provided they could put up with my whinges. I Do Not Like Travelling. In the end, this niggle negates your list headings.

Elaine is very good at reusing things and reducing waste. She has taught me much. It would not worry Elaine to be thought Old, although she would be surprised to be still thought young, which happens sometimes. Older people know what they are doing, and do it. Tell that to all the ageist twenty-year-olds.

I tried reading *The Prefect*, but the crushing dullness of the prose and plot stopped me dead in my tracks. Helena and Merv Binns are Reynolds fans, so I'll hand on the hardback to them. I should keep it until it's valuable enough for me to learn how to use eBay so I can flog it.

Thanks for the little talk about coffee. I also fall asleep, however briefly, every early afternoon. I always have done so, even back in university days. When I was working in the Macmillan office (1984–86), the only way I could stop myself falling asleep after lunch was to step out to buy a cold can of Coke. I never did find out whether it was the stepping out after lunch, or the Coke itself, that enabled me to stop my head dipping to the desk.

I thought I could give up coffee as well, until I went cold turkey. I was very ill, and had to visit the doctor for an anti-nausea injection. After a week of non-stop headaches, I gave myself the infinite joy of returning to my pet addiction.

Mark:

I don't think anybody, least of all me, worried that I ran a private letter from you to me through ANZAPA, because it was a very interesting letter. And it did keep up your membership page count.

You can count on a fair amount of knowledge of Things British in any educated audience in Australia, because sooner or later we have to read British magazines or newspapers to find any in-depth reporting of international affairs. British politics is a sort of low background hum to all matters Australian, more so if one listens to ABC news and no other, and listens to a fair number of programs on ABC Radio National.

So you are allowed (even invited) to over-explain, but you can be confident that most of us will know what you are talking about anyway.

When I started buying SF books, the only way to get American editions were in British editions, especially Pan, Panther and Corgi paperbacks. The only way to buy American SF books now is to buy from a specialist bookshop (only one in Melbourne, Minotaur, as Slow Glass is unknown to the general public). The 'SF' shelves in general bookstores contain only American and British fantasy, with a bit of British SF if the store stocks

Gollancz books. The local A&R and Collins chain stores stock nothing but HarperCollins, Orbit and Transworld (Hodder). So if Garry Dalrymple wants people to try good SF, where will they buy such books?

I haven't had the courage yet to read Harrison's *Nova Swing*, especially as I didn't like *Light*. Reports from Nova Mob members during the meeting to discuss the Clarke nominees didn't make me want to pick up *Nova Swing*. My recommendation is Harrison's recent career's-length collection of short fiction.

Our TV-watching list is nearly as terse as yours:

- Monday: *Enough Rope*, Andrew Denton's superb interview program (ABC)
- Wednesday: *At the Movies* (ABC), reviews of new films by David Stratton and Margaret Pomeranz. I usually agree with David and disagree with Margaret, but often they agree with each other.
- The British cop show time slot (Fridays, 8.30–10.00 p.m.), when there is something I want to watch. This does not happen often, as *Wire in the Blood*, *Foyle's War*, *Rebus* and a few others are down to four episodes each per year. I've given up on *Silent Witness* and *Dalziel and Pascoe*, because of the peculiarly jittery style currently adopted by most BBC drama programs. *Foyle's War* is the only series that is guaranteed brilliant, because of high quality of the scripts, acting and direction. *Inspector Morse* was my favourite, but both show and leading actor have bitten the dust, and the follow-up program *Lewis* has not been shown here.

I don't watch British comedy, or American TV at all, and very rarely Australian programs. Most seem designed for idiots.

I agree: the term '50-ish American woman, a librarian' does not do justice to Spike.

Glen Crawford:

KOBWEBS . . . REDUCED

Your weight-reduction program sounds just like some I've tried at various times in my life. After each weight reduction, I've put on more than I've lost, but I don't know how to reduce weight without some premeditated action. I'm a Hungry Person, that's all.

Having been an inadvertent contributor to *Dreaming Down Under* (as George Turner's literary executor), I would have thought that George's contribution, the first 20,000 words of what would have been another novel, should have been interesting to a scriptwriter. I very much wish George had stayed alive to finish it. I don't remember the Sara Douglass story, and I can't remember any resemblances between the anthology's contents and those of *Playboy*. My own favourite story is Isobelle Carmody's.

Thanks for your piece about Charlotte Emily. I've never been able to get excited about children (they are so generous with their pissing, pooing and chucking), but you summarise well what makes children interesting to you.

Thanks to family members who gave me birthday and Christmas presents when I was a kid, I had quite a few singles before the Beatles era, and several albums. My first single was 'Joey's Song' (Bill Haley's Comets) (1959), which was No 1 in Australia, but has been forgotten elsewhere in the world. (I did finally find a copy on CD.) My first albums were Roy Orbison's *Lonely and Blue* (1961), Frank Ifield's *I'll Remember You* (1962) and *The Shadows Greatest Hits* (1962), followed by Roy Orbison's

In Dreams (1963). All have been released on CD. The CD version of the *Shadows LP* has thirty tracks instead of the original fourteen. Much more valuable is the six-CD boxed set of every track the *Shadows* recorded from 1958 to 1964.

I didn't much like heavy metal — it always seemed like a poor copy of the great rock-blues bands, such as Cream and Led Zeppelin.

Garry P. Dalrymple:

TRANSCENDENTAL BASENJIS, SERMONS AND ENLIGHTENMENT No 24

Sorry that family and mundane matters stopped you getting to ConVergence in June. As I've said before, you could have used it as a template for a Sydney natcon.

I've never read Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, but I can't remember anybody actually detesting it before. The Hitchcock movie is one of his best. Who could ever forget Judith Anderson as Mrs Danvers?

I thought *Trekkers* was an insult to the noble followers of the starship *Enterprise*. Nobody in the documentary gave any idea of the origins of *Star Trek* fandom; there were no interviews with Bjo Trimble, whose write-in campaign is credited with persuading the network to make the second series; and there was very little idea of how *Trek* fandom works, or its relationship with general fandom.

Thanks for your talk about your mother when she turned eighty. Why *not* offer her a eulogy? You tell of an interesting life, so I'm sure she deserves praise. It's much better to tell her how well you think of her before she dies than praise her during the funeral.

Thanks for your guide to the Science Week Freecon. It's been awhile since John Foyster used to program at least one science talk at any Melbourne convention. Dick Jenssen's presentation on meteorology, his specialty, at the 1980 Melbourne convention was one of the last. At each Continuum except No 4, Chris Lawson delivered the one unmissable item of the convention, his annual wrap of the year's developments in science.

Diane and John Fox:

RHUBARB ICY POLES

John:

Not a bad bit of name-dropping: you just happen to mention that your writing teacher is Gabrielle Carey. Thanks for the biography.

I still can't warm to the way in which you are being 'taught' writing. I can't think of any reason for writing except to say what I'm desperate to say, so I don't think I could get much out of the kind of curriculum you describe. However, most visual artists who attended art school remember being taught by means of incredibly boring exercises, such as still life studies. Maybe the same procedure could work for a writer. If I had the impulse to write, the only way I could do it would be to rewrite and rewrite the story I wanted to tell until it began to work the way I wanted it to. Or I might simply write the story once and put it in the desk drawer for six months. I would want to be able to analyse the faults in my own story, as if it had been written by somebody else.

All this is very theoretical stuff from me, since I don't have any ideas for stories. Continuing best wishes for your own efforts.

Diane:

One of the most enjoyable films Elaine and I have seen recently has been Kenneth Branagh's film of *Much Ado About Nothing*. While the tragedies have many comic elements, a comedy like *Much Ado* has several potentially tragic elements. It wouldn't have taken many plot changes to make a *Romeo and Juliet* from the same story.

The trouble with *Impostor*, as with so many other adaptations of Phil Dick short stories, is that one bit of the short story appears at the beginning of the film, the final bit at the end, and a long chase is added to the middle. If only somebody would film the major Phil Dick novels.

I haven't seen the rest of the videos/DVDs you mention, although I have a vague memory of watching one episode of the BBC series of *Hitchhiker's*. I remember the clunkiness, too.

Thanks for the account of your Anzac Day. Not something I would ever do (as my father never took part in an Anzac march), and I'm not even sure where Dad's medals went to. Probably my mother gave them to my nephew, who is in the army, before she died.

It's not been a good year for us, has it? Thanks for the story of your father's death. It's a pity he had to go through so much pain at the end. And it sounds as if your mother has not had a good year, either. Sixty-one years of marriage! If my father hadn't died in 1989, my parents would have been together for sixty-five years.

Funerals usually go much more smoothly than weddings, but that stuff-up about changing the time and not informing your mother was unforgivable.

When my Uncle Jim died a few months ago, the funeral was in two parts: the religious ceremony, including the eulogy, given by my cousin Brian; and a separate RSL ceremony, concluded with the playing of Reveille and Last Post. I had never before seen that division of duties at a funeral.

Michael Green:
BOOKMARK No 5

Yes, there is something sad about a rusted satellite dish. Can it pick up anything if the dish itself is not shiny?

Frank must trust you a lot, to have entrusted a cockatiel to a household where a cat already reigns.

Isn't it fun moving into a new place, only to find all the things on which you depend need replacing? We've been through all that during the last three years. Our plumber, compared with yours, measured all the pipes and gaps properly, *then* ordered the new toilet fittings for us.

Jack Herman:
NECESSITY 76: BOB

You've got me here. I have no idea which song lyric you are quoting.

I'm glad you found the right name for 'climate change sceptics' — 'climate change deniers'.

Not that I expect much from a Rudd government, but maybe that's the message we're supposed to get. I hope Garrett is right, and things actually will change. Rudd faces an oppositional Senate until next July, and a hung Senate from then on. By next July the recession we all expect to happen will probably be well under way; a Rudd government might not be able to change much, while at the same time being blamed for the recession.

Thanks for the printing offer. We don't seem to be losing anybody at the moment because of printing problems. We lost Chris Garcia because he could not afford the \$US60 that it costs me to send his mailings back to him. I could have easily worked out a way to print his shortish mailings. Anyone who needs me to offer printing facilities — allow me enough time, and be prepared to send me 7 cents per side. For a six-pager, 33 copies, that's \$A14.

When I was studying Australian history in the 1960s, the consensus among historians was that Australia's recession began earlier than America's, and was largely the result of falling primary product prices. I don't know if that is still the prevailing view. In 1970, during my second year of teaching, I conducted a survey among my Year 11 students at Ararat Technical School. I asked them to ask their parents and grandparents about their experiences of the Depression. Most reported that their families survived quite well during the 1930s. All had had home gardens, and there was a lot of swapping of food and services between households. If the family owned its own house, the members could survive even if the husband was unemployed.

The difference between our radio experiences is that the Gillespie kids were not allowed to listen to serials on commercial radio. Most of them were on at the same time as the *ABC Children's Hour*, which was followed by *Blue Hills*, sacred text in our household. I do remember listening to *Hop Harrigan* and *Biggles* (on 3AW) during Grade 6 (1958). It was only during my early teenage years that I discovered the Macquarie Network quiz shows, starring Bob Dyer and Jack Davey. No sooner had I discovered Davey's shows than he took 'sick leave', then died of cancer. *Pick a Box* (Dyer's main show) was simulcast for some years. We followed on radio the rise and rise of Barry Jones as he won one marathon quiz contest after another. If we were visiting Auntie Linda and Uncle Fred on the same night of the week, we got to see Barry Jones in action. I can't remember when 3AW dropped the radio version.

It doesn't comfort me that you are in the same superannuation position as I am. I think I would continue working as late as possible, but suddenly there is no work. How to enjoy forced retirement? . . . write, write, write. Probably it would be better to walk, walk, walk.

Thanks for digging out some of the ammunition to use against climate change deniers.

Film buffs seem to agree that Richard Attenborough can cast a pall of dullness over even the most interesting material, such as *Oh, What a Lovely War*, and the lives of Chaplin and Gandhi. He's always wanted to be another David Lean, but never has been. Some of his movies must have made money. I saw a report on the email list PnP a few weeks ago that 'Lord Dickie', looking frail, attended the premiere of his most recent movie.

Thanks for the reviews. I didn't catch *The Singer*, but enjoyed *The History Boys* a lot. Thanks for the reminder of Stephen Campbell Moore's name. Has he appeared in any film since? He's one of those actors who should do really well if he gets the right film. Probably he works mainly in the theatre. I liked the double ending better than anybody else did.

I haven't seen *Half Nelson*, although people keep recommending it. Ryan Gosling only just manages to lift the glacially slow *Fracture* to watchability, so I'm looking forward to him in some later, better film.

I haven't seen *Starman* around on DVD, but will buy it if I see it.

Eric Lindsay:
KINGDOM OF THE BLAND x 2

Best quote of the mailing: 'Glad to see tradition followed in the dog ate my homework editorial, following the new tradition that computer is substituted for dog, and fanzine for homework.'

Every now and again Dick Smith's advertises a vinyl record player that is fully connected to a computer so that one can record directly to CD from it. It's about \$500 per unit. I haven't seen any reviews of the effectiveness of its transfer software.

I do remember Big Events in my life. Almost the *only* things I can remember are events that play as big dramatic scenes in my mind. I can't remember poetry, prose or plays verbatim, I can't remember numbers, and I have to take a shopping list with me if the number of items exceeds three. Yet I have vivid childhood memories of occasions when I was embarrassed (there were quite a few of these), suffered utter misery (ditto) or when something really wonderful happened (not many of these). Similarly, I have many vivid memories of my early years in fandom — the years when my real life began.

I still don't understand how you get quality sound from a computer. I presume you have some way of amplifying the sounds from the computer so that they sound good through those speakers you describe. My speakers are packed away somewhere; they need a decent amplifier and CD player. And MP3 tracks would be useless for providing quality sound. My computer is not connected to the Internet. Elaine's is, but our dial-up connection is too slow for downloading music or video.

To go back to a discussion from a while ago: why not send me all your contributions by PDF so that I can print them here? Would you mind paying \$14 per issue of *Kingdom* or *Bland*?

I would start with the assumption that all production of power by non-renewable and/or carbon-emitting means will have to be illegal throughout the world within the next twenty years or the human race is stuffed, and work backwards from there toward developing ways of producing power by non-renewable methods. The final real cost of continuing with current power production methods will be so high that the intermediate cost of research and development of renewable power seems puny. That's why all your talk of costs and economics is beside the point compared with the problem that must be solved. (The other solution is that offered by David Lake in his story 'Re-deem the Time' — progressively turn off every current invention until we have the same carbon emissions per capita that we had in 1700 or earlier. Most of us would be dead, but the correct balance between the human race and all other species would have been returned to normal.)

Eric, if you and Jean had flown in for my birthday, you would have been following a tradition established by Robin Johnson and John Foyster for my fiftieth birthday. If Mark and Claire had flown in for my birthday, *that* would have been unique.

Jean Weber:
JEANZINE 2007-2

The trip report continues to be enjoyable. Why have your travelling companions suddenly lost their names, whereas they had them in *Jeanzine 2007-1*?

I had no idea that Switzerland was not a member of the European Union! Thanks for that of new informa-

tion. Did you have to change your euros for Swiss francs as soon as you crossed the border?

When you consider that at least one doctor once wrote me off as 'the least fit man he had ever seen', I'm not sure why I haven't been struck by joint arthritis. One of my sisters has had a hip replacement, and the other will have one in two weeks' time. I have had back pains and headaches all my life, but the exercises suggested by my chiropractor and masseur during the last ten years have kept me feeling fairly okay until recently.

LynC:
FROM THE LAIR OF THE LYNX No 41

Yes, the cats do tell us to turn off the rain on those rare mornings when it rains. Flicker got so annoyed yesterday morning by that wet ground outside that eventually he peed down the bath plughole. Cats know how to communicate.

Thanks for the report on the convention I couldn't attend (ConVergence 2, 2007), apart from two hours each on the Friday and Saturday nights. I'm going to spend the next three years pissed off at having to miss most of that convention.

Thanks for the reminder to read Graham Joyce's *TWOC*. I bought it when it was published, but keep forgetting to read it.

It seems a great pity that you and Clive have never won a fun fund. Sometimes it seems as if every older fan has won at least one fan fund race at some time during the last thirty-five years. If you ever want to stand again, please ask me to nominate you.

Dan McCarthy:
PANOPTICON No 42

Can I assume that Richard Wilbair is a New Zealand poet, and that 'Shame' is his reaction to New Zealanders' attitudes to themselves? It might have been written by an Australian about Australians.

Sounds as if you have been done over on the matter of disability allowance. What do you actually live on?

I also worry that I would not be able to buy a stand-alone scanner if my current machine stopped working. No sign of that happening yet, and the current scanner is only a couple of years old.

Another great line from the mailing: '[Murray] is sort of like the Eiffel Tower; one is enough.' I'm sure Murray agrees.

Who could deny that ANZAPA is essential reading after finishing your 'Westward Ho!' trip report? The photos were wonderful, as was your account. Thanks in particular for the map. Maps were what I could not provide in my BBB Fund Trip Report — I do not know how to use computer software to trace out a particular route on an actual map, as you have done here.

I have no idea how we could ever afford to do a New Zealand trip, but you've convinced me that New Zealand scenery is something huge missing from our lives.

Clare McDonald:
ARBITRARINESS

Thanks for telling us about your job, Clare. It must be annoying to fill in time at an office instead of getting on with real work, such as surfing the net and editing *Captain's Log*.

The 'coffee guy', like the barman in all those old movies, is supposed to listen to all your troubles, not tell you his! I would change cafés very quickly.

Congrats on the Ditmar nomination. I would like to have read out the name of *Captain's Log* as Best Fanzine at the ConVergence awards ceremony, or the name of *Ethel the Aardvark*, but instead I had to try to pronounce the names of two people I had never heard of who had edited a 'magazine' (which turned out to be a website) that I had never heard of.

I trust you got to meet some Perth fans while you were over there, and that the job worked out well. Please keep in touch with regular fandom now that you're back in Melbourne.

It must have been good to keep up your writing course while you were in Perth.

Jeanne Mealy:
LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

I always thought *Star Wars* was a bit fake — in fact, it was fake all the way through — but it did change the pace of films. There is an odd nostalgia among film buffs for films of the early seventies. Directors of the time are portrayed as adventurous, arty and entertaining, etc. What really happened is that Hollywood took on many of the pretensions of 1960s European cinema without much understanding of what the French and Italian *auteurs* had been up to. American films became much less comprehensible, and the action slowed way way down. After *Star Wars* became popular, Hollywood returned to the best elements of its trashy past. Nobody saw how the combination of fast trashiness and brilliant special effects would ruin Hollywood, resulting in movies with no brains, characters or plots — with nothing but special effects and incomprehensibly fast action.

Thanks for picking up the double message in my tribute to my mother. Many times in my life I was angry with her and my father for failing to appreciate those things that really interested me — but I can also appreciate the elements of my upbringing that pushed me beyond the limits of a mundane Aussie existence. I found SF fandom. My sister Jeanette found folk music fandom, which operates very like SF fandom.

Alastair Reynolds, along with Stephen Baxter, is credited with reviving 'hard SF' in Britain, and making it very popular. I think Reynolds is a dull writer, whose 'adventure' style has as much subtlety as a kid brother describing a Sunday School picnic when the bees invaded. I don't get far when I try reading his very long novels. I've much preferred his short fiction so far.

Best line of the mailing: 'John has been known to take a picture of a design in the litterbox.'

Thanks for describing the Lightning Write item at Wiscon. Sounds like a great idea for a future program item at a Melbourne convention.

Terry Morris:
HOLD THAT TIGER!

I liked the cover photo.

Our cat Violet, we were sure, understood spoken English. She couldn't read. *Inspector Violet*? Great idea, but nobody has ever figured out a way to train a cat to act. That would mean obeying a human, whereas cats expect humans to obey them. Are we all characters in a planet-wide movie being made by cats?

The treatment of Christopher Lee by Jackson sounds

shabby — unless one waited for the long DVD version of the second 'Lord of the Rings' movie, as I did. I confess I haven't watched any of the extras on any of the special DVD sets. I must look for the clip of Lee reading 'One Ring to Rule Them All'.

YouTube is still a complete mystery to me. How does it work? It sounds as if I would need Broadband to access it.

John Newman:
PING!

Our (relatively) little house in Collingwood could be heated using three column radiators, one in each work-room and one in the living room. Sort of. Our feet froze for six weeks of every year. The cost of electricity per quarter was enormous.

The (relatively) large house in Greensborough needs house-wide heating. This has been a problem. One part of the gas-heated ducted system failed the first winter we were here. The part was replaced; cost \$500. The old system survived the second winter. During the coldest, rainiest week of this year, our third winter, the old system failed completely. Elaine made yet another raid on her savings, and somehow came up with the money for a new gas-powered ducted heating system. When the chap took out the old system and put in the new one, he discovered so much gimcrackery and corrosion in the old one that he was astonished it had worked at all. The old system was at least thirty years old. We hope that the new system will save us money *somewhere*; probably the cost of gas per quarter will be somewhat less than it was last year.

All of which is a way of saying that we do not envy your house-heating problems.

You pinpoint the reason why we do not watch most documentaries on TV. If we agree with the point of view, such as Dawkins', why watch the program? He'll just tell us what we know already, at great length, offering us nothing but boredom and irritation. If the documentary offers an idiotic point of view, such as the recent ABC 'global warming sceptic' show, we would just get very angry and turn off after three minutes. It's difficult to find a TV documentary that tells us a lot that we don't know already, succinctly, with lots of relevant photographs.

One of our friends was struck down suddenly by gout. He also suffered a mixture of pain almost beyond endurance and a reaction of 'It can't be happening to me!' In your case, it was something else: a much more severe example of what struck me down in 1995: plantar fasciitis. Eventually a mixture of vigorous foot exercise, a change of shoes, and the permanent use of orthotics in my shoes have prevented the condition from recurring.

Tell me where the Heffernans feature in your lineage? Then we'll go on line and trace the connections.

Thanks for your picture of the green plain that was once 'Lake Cairn Curran'.

Cath Ortlieb:
YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HOME WHEN
YOU FIND A WOMBAT IN YOUR BED No 111

Many sympathies for the loss of your aunt. It's been a bad, bad year.

Lucy Schmeidler:
OZ SF FAN No 39

As I emailed you when I received this contribution: you have a good hand, Lucy. If I tried hand-writing a fanzine, everybody would think it was written by an alien.

What a nightmare situation! I'm glad you survived it, but can hardly comment on it. It was interesting to see the difference it made using mediating rabbis instead of going to the law. In all the years I was closely associated with the Churches of Christ, I cannot remember any local minister being asked to settle that type of dispute. Most ministers were too busy settling petty disputes about theological matters between members of their congregations.

Another nice line: 'Not that the cats follow anyone's orders, of course.'

Thanks for the descriptions of the children in your apartment.

Roger Sims:
ANZAPA 770

Thanks for the obit for Bennett Sims. Apart from the usual sympathy, I feel something extra, as my father also died of colon cancer at the age of 69. In fandom, I rarely meet people who are really famous (and, I assume, wealthy), but at least I can say that I have met Roger Sims, cousin to Bennett Sims. (Sorry, but I hadn't heard of him. Maybe film fans such as Dick Jenssen will recognise the name.)

Sorry about the house situation. On the other side of the continent, Lorraine Tutihasi and her husband face the same situation. They know where they want to move, but they cannot sell their current house. Presumably this is because all those subprime mortgage holders we keep hearing about in the papers have been chucked out of their houses, and those houses are suddenly on the market as well.

Sorry about your tussles with the medical profession. Despite the fact that nothing can cure PD, I hope everything else that's done to you actually helps.

Your heart rate and blood pressure reading are much better than mine. Live forever, Roger!

I hate to admit it, Roger, but as 8 June was the first day of ConVergence 2 here in Melbourne, and things got rather hectic, I completely forgot to raise a glass to your seventy-seventh birthday. Surely somebody at the convention must have done so.

The NZ accent isn't much different from Australia's. Nigel Rowe should have been pleased that you identified the accent from the correct section of the globe.

We haven't had anybody on either side of my family get to 101. I'm pretty sure my Uncle Bill (my mother's brother) got to ninety-six. His sister Ruby got to ninety-four.

I enjoyed the story of Lt Cdr J. P. Fyffe.

Thanks for the photos. You're a handsome devil, aren't you? — you managed to keep your hair. I might be seventeen years younger than you, but look much older.

Gerald Smith:
LIFE IS GOOD

Your encounter with the medical profession seems to have gone well. It must feel odd to lose your navel.

I trust that carrying out home renovations really does improve your feeling about life. We couldn't afford renovations, so we moved; but you will improve the value of your place greatly.

You're having a lot of fun there in Sydney — sounds like a second honeymoon without having to go through the annoyance of getting married again. Actually, it sounds more like a second first-year-together rather than second honeymoon. During our first year together (the year *before* we got married), Elaine and I discovered new restaurants and went to concerts, and all that stuff we never do now. (We mightn't act so much like an old married couple if we still had a reasonable double income.)

Paul Keating: The Musical keeps gaining support as it tours. I think it's back in Melbourne for awhile — or has it already moved on?

I don't think Pink is within my musical scope, but I would like to have seen Martha Wainwright when she was here last.

I didn't spot any conspicuous points of intelligence in *Sunshine*. It is one of the most idiotic movies I've ever seen.

The days of 10BA have quite a different tinge when remembered by people in the film industry. Paul Harris interviews quite a few such people on his 3RRR program *Film Buffs' Forecast*. One of his interviewees in recent months remembers that period as the only time when Australian film actors and technical people had any certainty of work. Most of the films they made went down the gurgler, but successful films were also made then. There must be an *industry* for Australian film to make progress. It is still in much the same situation it was in the late seventies: very few films financed by private capital (therefore trying to compete with overseas major films), and most films still financed by government corporations (which often seem to want to make only uncommercial film projects). Of course, if Australian business investors did not have a basic aversion to art of any kind, they might produce a powerful stream of commercial films that do well here and sell overseas. Since Australian business people are tight-fisted rich cowards, something like 10BA is needed to draw film development money out of them.

I would like to believe as you do, Gerald, that any action of mine caused some inner glow to radiate from my parents' hearts. But there was something peculiar in my mother (or in my mother's generation) that belittled achievements of her kids, even those of Jeanette, whom she adored. It made almost no impression on her that I had become Fan Guest of Honour at a world convention. The equivalent position in her world would have been the current President of the World Churches of Christ. (A Melbourne man, John Alabaster, a layman not a minister, actually achieved this position many years ago. A year later he died of a heart attack at the age of forty.)

I thought *Hollywoodland* went a long way toward showing how difficult it is to make a judgment about characters' motives or fate. The script writer does this well. David Fincher does much the same thing with *Zodiac*, although at tedious length.

Bill Wright:
INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP

I'm not sure which is more impressive: Dick's science story behind the cover, or the creation of the cover itself.

His covers should be appearing on science fiction magazine covers, but they seem designed for SF magazines that no longer exist.

Thanks for your report of the convention I barely attended: ConVergence 2. However, if I had anticipated the killing of the bottle of Galafrey I might have stayed through the Great Debate. I wanted to avoid the footy crowds who might be boarding my train after 10.30 p.m., so I left before the debate.

On the Saturday night, again I wanted to catch my train reasonably early after the awards ceremony. I was rather dazed by the event, and very grateful for Carey's offer to take my Chandler award home in his car. However, if somebody had waved a bottle of Galafrey under my nose and suggested a quiet celebration I would not have said no.

Is that what Paul Haines' story 'Douf Douf Douf' was about? I have a problem understanding what is actually happening in some of Paul's stories, especially his lead story in *cOck*.

It's really odd you talking about this mysterious cartoonist 'Jenner'. As soon as I saw the examples you've reprinted I said: 'I did see Craig Hilton at the convention, but as usual he didn't speak to me.' I had not realised that Craig ever uses a *nom de plume*. I'm puzzled as to why Craig's caricatures make all those people look fat — or did something go wrong in your scanning?

I would love to have heard Cath Ortlieb's GoH speech, but it proved impossible to attend any events during days 3 and 4 of the convention. Did anybody tape the speech? Cath, do you have written version of it?

Thanks for the photos of Merv's op. I never did get to visit him in Alfred Hospital or at the rehabilitation hospital. I feel guilty about this . . . but I hate hospitals, and I was in the middle of the same rash of paying work that stopped me attending ConVergence.

Thanks very much for the portfolio of SF and fannish art. Thanks in particular for publishing the David Russell cartoons that have so far been squeezed out of *Steam Engine Time*. (Jan and I keep trying to fit 1000 words to a page without destroying anybody's eye sockets.)

The Creation was wonderful, as it took full advantage of the fine acoustics of the Auburn Uniting Church. The poor hardworking organist provided the backing, which meant there was no huge orchestra to drown out the choir and soloists. (I've experienced *Creations*, in what is now the Hamer Hall, where the orchestra has almost obliterated the fine work of the singers.) Thanks for arranging tickets to the concert, Bill, and to David for telling us about it. Also, Elaine and I had a chance to meet two of Bill's friends from his Mysterious Other Life. We really enjoyed talking to them.

I just realised I completely forgot to buy the CD-ROM of the performance. I'll email David for the Star Chorale's address.

Dick Jenssen's article about Donald Coxeter is informative and entertaining. The idea of geometry without images seems incomprehensible to me, so perhaps we should all be glad that Coxeter defeated the Bourbakists.

Thanks for the Stefanisms. As usual, his pieces are too brilliant to comment on.

Stefan's article about celebrities is probably accurate. Every time I hear someone say that he or she hates

the publicity involved in being a film star or pop idol, I think of all the Hollywood stars who have kept their privacy by never employing a publicity agent.

They must love Stefan around his workplace — so much so that the bosses probably spend all their time trying to think of a way to 'let him go'.

The Garry Party is a goer, especially with that slogan. But surely he could afford to promise more than \$500 per person? That's about what either party promised, in total, during the campaign.

You remembered that story completely wrong, Bill. We couldn't call the Fire Brigade to rescue Harry, even if they do try to rescue cats from trees, because Harry ran up the tree on Australia Day a couple of years ago, a day during which the state of Victoria was on fire and therefore every able-bodied fireperson was on full alert. We did call the only commercial pet rescuer in Melbourne. He lives in Cranbourne. He came anyway, and we paid him some astronomical sum for the privilege. You are correct in saying that, properly speaking, he did not rescue Harry; he finally came back at 5 a.m. He has not been allowed to escape since.

Sally Yeoland:
LES CHATTES PARTIES No 89

I adopt the rule: never let a cat near your computer. Elaine allows cats into her workroom while she is working. If it gets late at night, and Harry decides he is hungry, he walks all over the computer and keyboard. This usually stops Elaine from working, which means she has to feed the cats. Harry might look sweet, but he retains his belief in the divine right of cats to rule humans.

Elaine saw Richard Hryckiewicz in Melbourne the other week. He was quite friendly; they caught up news; but he doesn't visit the way us these days. Sad, really. Perhaps we should crash a computer or two, hoping he might hear our terrible cries for help.

Thanks for the final news about the Eastern Inn. It's impressive that you can even give a date for when you started eating there. It can't have been long after that when you first invited Elaine and me to join you there every Friday night. That continued for quite a few years. As you say, a lot of other birthdays and major fannish gatherings also took place there. The only negative result of the Friday-night arrangement is that I failed to see many episodes of *Inspector Morse* the first time they were shown. We did not have a VCR until Dick Jenssen gave us one during the mid 1990s, so I could not time-shift my favourite programs.

I let people off the 20-page limit after nobody objected to the increase in fees that took place in August 2006.

My address and phone number are all over the Web, I suppose, but hardly anyone visits or phones — or at least not recently. Yvonne Rousseau, who has to travel from Adelaide to Melbourne by bus, then out to Greensborough by train, is our most frequent visitor. The other frequent visitor is Bill Wright, who has to reach Greensborough by train, then climb that dreadful Howard Street hill to reach our house.

— Bruce Gillespie, 26 November 2007