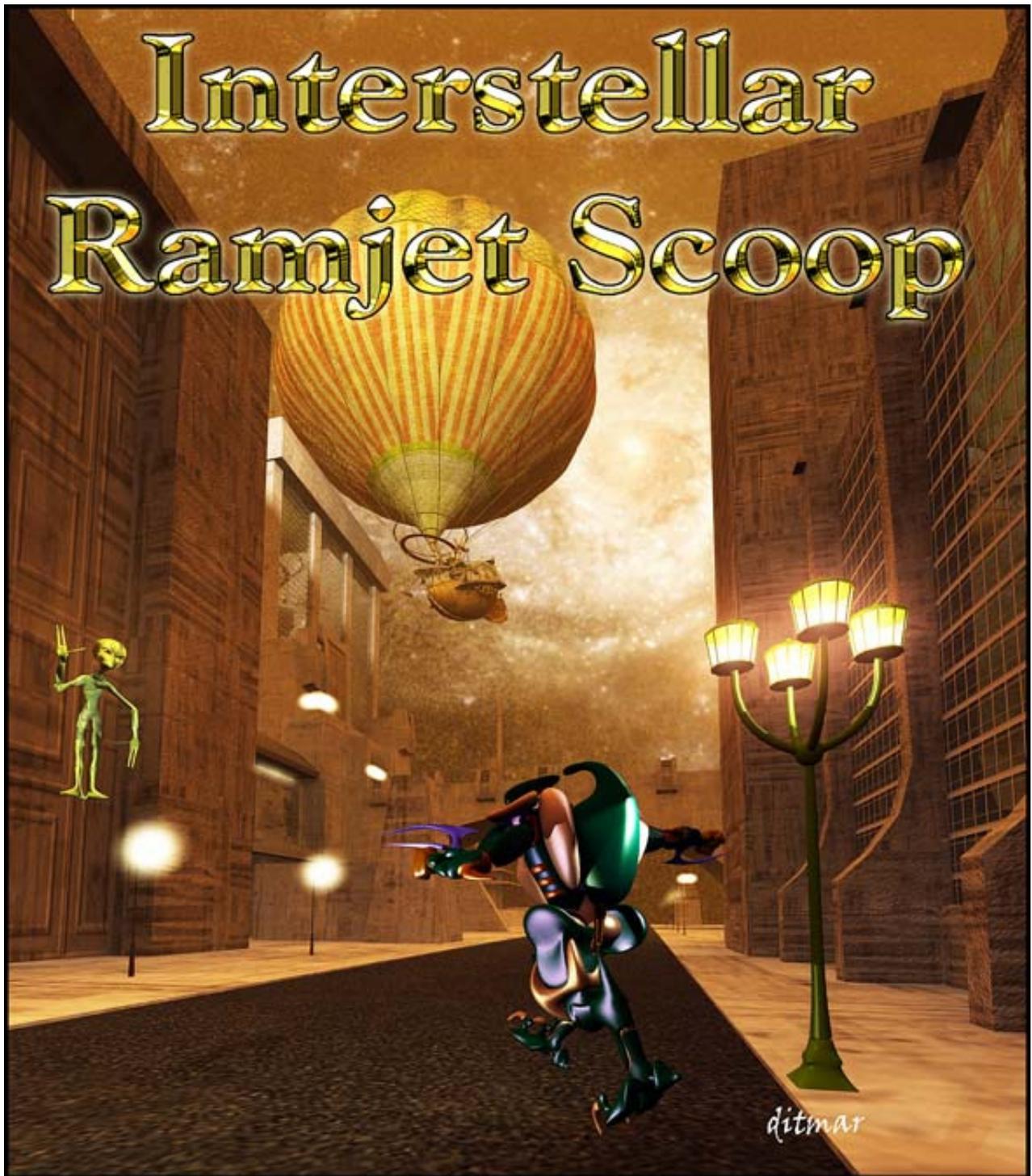


# Interstellar Ramjet Scoop



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PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY FOR ANZAPA  
BY BILL WRIGHT

UNIT 4, 1 PARK STREET, ST. KILDA WEST, VICTORIA 3182

**THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS**



GRAPHICS BY DITMAR

INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP (THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS)  
PUBLISHED BY BILL WRIGHT, 4/1 PARK STREET, ST. KILDA, VICTORIA 3182

for ANZAPA #251 - October 2009

If your nose runs  
And your feet smell  
You're upside down.

Anon.

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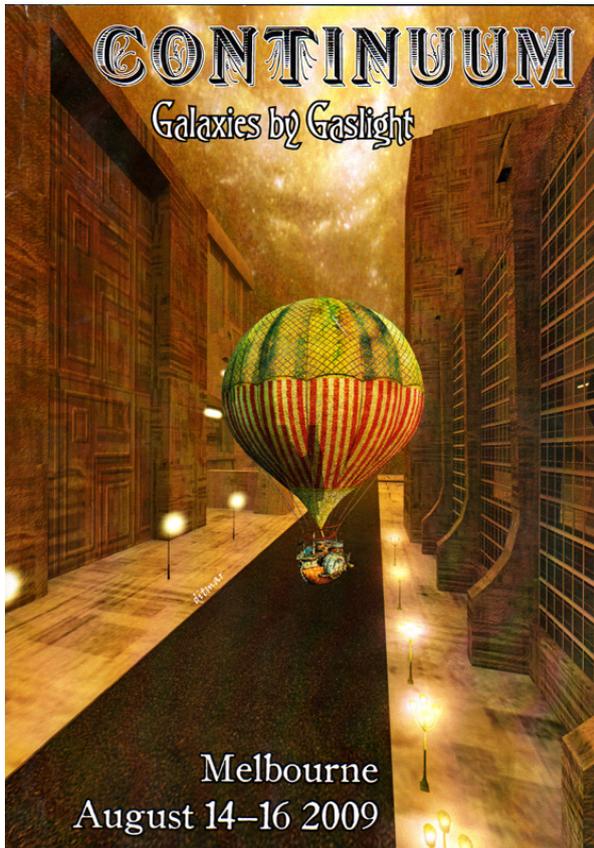
## This Issue's Cover

### *Covert Attendees at Continuum 5*

*Cover graphic and text by Dick Jenssen*

During August 14<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Melbourne hosted *Continuum 5: Galaxies by Gaslight*.

There will be a detailed Con Report in this issue from the beloved editor of *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*. Bill Wright, who was on the Con Committee, volunteered me to generate a possible cover for the *Convention Booklet*. As readers of these notes know, I find it difficult to produce graphics to a brief – but I tried, and made a few versions of what I thought might be suitable. These were minor variants of a theme, and were in the



nature of colour changes and compositional elements.

To my surprise, one of these images was accepted. Which was immensely flattering... I can't resist blowing my own trumpet – it's shown on the left.

But, success always expands my head, which inevitably leads to a minor form of delirium and surrealistic dream fugues. This was no exception, and, like that ghostly galleon I found myself tossed upon cloudy seas in the land of dreams, where, so I thought, I was privy, through some arcane and esoteric form of mind transfer, to sensing hidden entities invisibly frequenting the Convention. There seemed to be relatives – if such be the appropriate term – of *Jay Score*, of *Kli Morg*, of characters from Jules Verne...

Nostalgia for the tales of my youth suffused these dreams, and the sky above in this vision, glowing in ardent gold,

*...methought would open and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked,  
I cried to dream again.*

But dreams are only dreams, and yet, even if evanescent, one may sometimes attempt to capture their spirit.

And so the cover graphic.

#### *Technical notes*

As always, *Poser 8* was used for some of the figures in the cover, and were imported and used in *Vue Complete*. *Adobe CS3* was employed for final tweaking.

Oh, the inaugural *Chronos Awards* were given at *Continuum 5*. As usual, Bruce Gillespie found himself clutching one. And one of the contributors to *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop* also was honoured with a Chronos. But that is something Bill Wright may wish to mention in his convention report...

*Ditmar*

## Kirstyn McDermott joins Macmillan stable

It was announced on Wednesday, May 27, 2009, that 2009 Chronos Award winner Kirstyn McDermott has been signed by Pan Macmillan to publish her first two novels under the Picador imprint, with the first to be released in early 2010 and the second approximately 12 months later. The unrelated novels are both dark fantasy tales with contemporary urban Australian settings.

## Letter from Lloyd Penney

*Lloyd Penney (1706-24 Eva Rd, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M9C 2B2), September 4, 2009...*

Dear Bill:

Thank you kindly for the August edition of *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*. Time for some quick comments, and see if I can fire them off to you before I go to work tonight.

Issue 250 of ANZAPA? I hope there were suitable celebrations for that milestone. Not many fannish publications hit that mark, so congratulations to all involved.

A lot of us would like to get down to Australia to visit with our friends, but there is just too much geography in the way, and not enough cash to bridge the gap. My kudos and envious looks to those Australian fans who made it up to Montreal for the Worldcon this year; I'd like nothing better than to come down to see you, but I can't and that definitely means that Aussiecon 4 is out of the question. However, getting to Reno, Nevada is much more likely, and we will soon be saving for that trip.

The H1N1 flu, better known as swine flu, is cropping up everywhere, and it may have reached the pandemic stage, but there's still no consensus about whether or not it is really all that serious. Yes, some have died because of it, but it may be just a little stronger than any other flu that's come past here in a while.

I found that while Apple and Palm fought for the longest time over free music downloads, my old Palm Tungsten PDA is still a good tool for playing music. I downloaded a free player, I've downloaded a ton of free music from the 60s, 70s and 80s, and whenever I need a music fix, I crank it up, plug in an earphone, and enjoy myself. It might not be as compact as an iPod, but it still does the job. Old tech is not the same as bad tech. I wish Palm was still making PDAs, but somehow, this most useful tool is not in favour any more.

In the Early Australia Comics near the end, the character Anthony Fury is mentioned. One local young man who would be ticked by this is local fan and playwright Anthony Furey, who often writes op ed pieces and columns for local newspapers.

And now I am done for real...it's getting close to dinner time, and I must get this done before then, and then it's off to the evening job. Many thanks, take care, see you soon.

Yours,

**Lloyd Penney.**

Lloyd,

*Strangely, there hasn't been a song and dance about reaching the 250<sup>th</sup> issue of Anzapa. Everybody's too busy keeping body and soul together and gearing up for Aussiecon 4*

*You might be saving for Renovation in 2011, but indications are that the 2010 NaSFic (Reconstruction at Raleigh NC on Aug 5-8, 2010) is worth attending. Guests of Honour include Eric Flint (Author), Brad W. Foster (Artist), Juanita Coulson (Fan), and Toni Weisskopf (Editor). That's a five star line up.*

*Some people are saying that governments have over-reacted to the swine flu pandemic. I don't think so. Measures they have taken have limited its spread. That might be important if it mutates or intersects with another flu variety to create a more virulent form of the disease. The rhyme was never so true ->*

*I sneezed a sneeze into the air  
It came to rest I know not where  
But dark and cold were the looks of those  
In whose vicinity I snooze.*

*Eric Lindsay, an Anzapan who, despite having been long retired, seems to be on top of communications technology, reports that Palm lost their challenge to be allowed to have their Palm Pre pretend to be an iPod for linking with iTunes. There's more information later in this zine if you're interested.*

*Please refer to my report on Continuum 5, the fabulous Steampunk convention I helped to run in August 2009, to learn how my panel on the history of early Australian comic strips went. I'll be attending another convention in Canberra this weekend, October 2-5, 2009, but I doubt if I'll have time to research Stanley Pitt's first publication 'Anthony Fury' (1942) for your friend Anthony Furey.*

**Bill Wright**

## Letter of comment from Ditmar

Bill,

### *Bovril, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and great lines of literature*

In the August issue of *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop* you reproduce an advertisement from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of the Pope quaffing a mug of Bovril. The trade name has a colourful history behind it, and involves one of the great – well, depending on your literary tastes – authors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whose works span the years 1820 to 1876. I speak, naturally enough, of Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

He gave the world such immortal lines as: “*It was a dark and stormy night*”

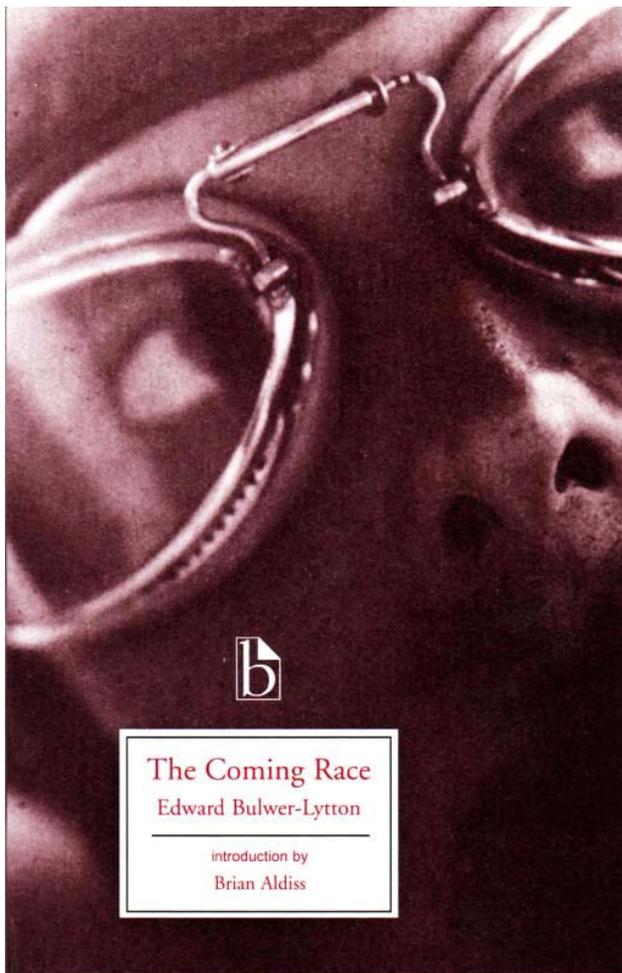
as well as: “*...it was a wild and stormy night.*”

which either indicates the natural state of English weather, or exposes a fetish. The first quote is the opening line of his novel *Paul Clifford*, and the latter is from Book V of *Leila, or the Siege of Granada*. But, equally effective, and just as memorable, is the opening of *The Last Days of Pompeii*:

“*Ho Diomed, well met! Do you sup with Glaucus tonight?*”

And I ask, “*How can anyone resist reading such a novel?*” The answer, I suspect, for contemporary readers is: “*Easily,*” but at the time of publication it was a great success, and sold mightily. It has also inspired a number of movies and television miniseries. Popularity is not to be scorned.

Bulwer-Lytton also, in his play *Richelieu: or the Conspiracy*, told us, “*The pen is mightier than the sword.*”



If this was not sufficient (to be remembered for just the last quote would be reward enough for a lifetime), he also was involved in *Bovril*.

In 1871 his novel *The Coming Race* was published. It dealt with a land inside the Earth where dwell a people called the Vrilya. It is a matriarchal society, the females are “*taller and grander than the men*” with “*countenances...devoid of the softness and timidity...of women as seen on the earth above*”.

The Vrilya can fly. Their powers stem from an all-pervading substance called *Vril*.

As Brian Aldiss points out in his introduction to a recent edition of the novel (from *Broadview Press*), “*the Vrilya can exercise influence over mind and bodies: in effect vril facilitates ESP. It can cure almost anything*”.

The novel, again, was hugely successful – so much so, that when a salty, concentrated, meat extract was marketed shortly thereafter, it was named *Bovril*, the *Bo* from bovine, and the *vril* from – well, it’s obvious.

Aldiss tells us that “*commercial products adopted variants of the word ‘vril’ to denote life, vitality and health...As an adolescent I was dosed with a tasty coffee-malt concoction called ‘Virol’...Vril was also adopted by another science fiction writer, George Griffith, in his novel *Olga Romanoff**”.

Somewhat closer to our times, in the Noel Coward/ David Lean movie *In Which We Serve* it is revealed that if one is ever tossed on a raging, freezing, ocean and chilled to the bones, a cup of Bovril, strongly seasoned with sherry, becomes a warming, glowing drink, and makes a wild and stormy night pale into insignificance.

*Dick Jensen*

## The editor in his milieu

Last week end I received a phone call from the office of Martin Foley, MHR for the Victorian Electorate of Albert Park that takes in St Kilda and its environs. They wanted 'a local identity' to accompany Mr Foley and a small party including the president of the Fitzroy Street Traders Association and a mother and her two children for a photo shoot at a new Super Tram Stop at the Cleve Gardens redevelopment, St Kilda Beach.

I wasn't sure about the 'local identity' bit, but I agreed to join the party. We waited in the freezing cold until Jason, a photographer from the Port Phillip Leader (part of a Melbourne suburban newspaper chain owned by Rupert Murdoch) showed up. For an hour and ten minutes no fewer than eleven trams came and went while he took over fifteen photographs of us in various staged situations. Then we repaired to The Pelican tapas bar next door to my place for a well-earned coffee courtesy of our host, Mr Foley.

On Monday, I received a phone call from the newspaper's editor and he chatted with me about the occasion for ten minutes. After that, I was surprised to find myself featured on page 5 of the Port Phillip Leader for Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Jason's photo and his editor's article follow...

### New stops along route 96 make public transport accessible to all



St Kilda resident and tram user Bill Wright.

Picture: JASON SAMMON. N14CK509

#### Trams | Paul Riordan

PORT Phillip's tram services are getting back on track.

New tram superstops, making it easier for people with prams or wheelchairs to easily reach the trams, are being built and more services added.

St Kilda resident Bill Wright said the new stops would make using public transport much easier. But he said more needed to be done to improve public transport priority on the roads.

Mr Wright fell heavily on a tram when a car cut across the tracks, forcing the tram driver to brake suddenly. "Motorists might not like it, but everyone should be giving way to public transport," he said.

Albert Park MP Martin Foley said work was about to begin on Luna Park's \$3 million tram stop.

"Currently this important transport interchange is a mess of cars, buses, trams and pedestrians - all trying to figure out who has right of way and which way to go," he said.

Other stops along route 96 will also get a spruce-up, with work starting in October.

A superstop near the St Kilda foreshore on Fitzroy St is operating.

Wikipedia says that Melbourne tram route 96 has been described as one of the World's Top 10 Tram rides. I might be prejudiced, but I agree with that assessment. It runs from a terminus at Blich Street, East Brunswick, along Nicholson Street (one of the most picturesque thoroughfares of Old Melbourne north of the central business district), through the city via Bourke Street Mall and along the 'light rail' (disused railway tracks converted for use by trams) past Albert Park where the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix is held in March each year to its other terminus at St Kilda Beach.

Interestingly, the Melbourne Convention Centre, site of Aussiecon 4 (68<sup>th</sup> Worldcon in Melbourne on 2-6 Sep, 2009), is on tram route 96. And the Cleve Gardens redevelopment is only one of a number of improvements to the St Kilda foreshore undertaken jointly by Port Phillip Council and the Victorian Government, including refurbishment of the derelict West Beach Pavilion at the west end of Catani Gardens as a public recreation centre with kiosk-style restaurant facilities and coffee bars. It's a fabulous environment to live in.

## Conventions on the horizon

### Australian conventions:

**Conflux 6** (Canberra on 2-5 Oct-2009)

<http://www.conflux.org.au/>

**Continuum 6** (Melbourne on 26-28 Feb-2010)

<http://www.continuum.org.au/>

**Aussie Natcon 2010 - 49th Natcon** – Dudcon 3, Melbourne, September 2010. Chair: Paul Ewins.

With the Worldcon happening in 2010, the Natcon will be somewhat on the small side. Dudcon 3, as it is known, will consist of a business meeting, the Ditmar Awards, and possibly a BBQ, and will be held as part of Worldcon. After that, the Natcon moves to Perth for Swancon 36 on . The Swancons have a reputation for excellence and it should be a wonderful event.

Paul Ewins wrote on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2009, “*There were no bids for the 2010 Natcon so I have volunteered to run "Dudcon 3" as a sort of a placeholder. It will be run in conjunction with Aussiecon 4 (just as Spawncon 2 was run in conjunction with Aussiecon 3 in 1999) and consist of a Business Meeting, Ditmars ceremony and possibly a barbeque. At this stage I don't know whether the Ditmars will be presented at the "other awards" ceremony or in a separate event. Aussiecon 4 has no connection with Dudcon 3 other than agreeing to provide space in the program for the Business Meeting and Ditmar Awards nor are they (at this stage) contributing financially to the cost of the Ditmars.*”

### World conventions (or near equivalent):

#### Aussiecon 4 (68<sup>th</sup> Worldcon)

will be held at the Melbourne (Australia) Convention and Exhibition Centre on September 2-6, 2010.

E-mail: [info@aussiecon4.org.au](mailto:info@aussiecon4.org.au) Website: [www.aussiecon4.org.au](http://www.aussiecon4.org.au)

Mailing address: GPO Box 1212, Melbourne 3001 AUSTRALIA

Guests of Honour:

Kim Stanley Robinson: Hugo and Nebula Award winning author

Shaun Tan: World Fantasy, Aurealis and Ditmar Award winning graphic artist

Robin Johnson: Fan Guest of Honour



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#### Reconstruction (2010 NaSFic – 10<sup>th</sup> occasional North American Science Fiction Convention)

will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina. On August 5-8, 2011

E-mail: [info@reconstructionsf.org](mailto:info@reconstructionsf.org) Website: <http://www.reconstructionsf.org/>

Mailing address: **ReConStruction, PO Box 31706, Raleigh, NC 27622**

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#### Renovation (69<sup>th</sup> worldcon)

will be held in Reno, Nevada, on August 17-21, 2011

E-mail: [info@renovationsf.org](mailto:info@renovationsf.org) Website: [www.renovationsf.org](http://www.renovationsf.org)

Mailing address: **Renovation, PO Box 13278, Portland, OR 97213-0278, USA**



## Continuum 5 (Aug 09) report

Friday 14th to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2009

It's been decades (the 1970s in fact) since I had attended a science fiction convention as a member of the committee, so Continuum 5 was special for me. The convention's theme was Steampunk, with the motif *Galaxies by Gaslight* inspired by the venue's name, *Ether*. My specific duties were limited to entertaining guests of the convention while the rest of the committee did last minute set up work before the registration desk opened for business. From then on I assisted only when needed, so I got to see most of the programme and was chuffed when the two sessions I ran were well attended and finished on time with no major hassles. Photographs in this report were taken by Helena Binns, unless otherwise attributed.

### Friday August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009



At left are convention co-chairs Rachel Holkner and Paul Poulson facing Continuum Foundation convener Danny Oz at the opening ceremony.

Seated are guests of honour, Australian playwright, songwriter, actress, editor, crime/thriller writer and young adult vampire writer **Narelle Harris**, and historical vampire fiction author **Chelsea Quinn Yarbro** from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Both guests were worked hard by the committee in scheduled programme items, workshops, kaffeklatches and readings. I can't imagine how they found time to enjoy themselves, but they said they did.

The inaugural **Chronos Awards** were presented by the Continuum Foundation (a nursery for convention organizers, convened by Danny Oz, that has run regional SF conventions in Melbourne since 2003). Both Danny and Awards administrator John Samuel officiated at the Chronos Awards ceremony. The winners are



Best Short Fiction (Tie) ***Neverland Blues*** by Adam Browne

***Painlessness*** by Kirstyn McDermott

Best Collected Work ***Dreaming Again*** edited by Jack Dann

Best Fan Writer ***Mark Smith-Briggs*** (Horrorscope)

Best Fan Artist ***Ditmar(Dick) Jensen***

Best Fan Publication ***Steam Engine Time*** intercontinental fanzine edited jointly by Bruce Gillespie (Melbourne) and Janine Stinson (Michigan, USA). Bruce collects yet another award to add to his trophy cabinet – see picture at left.

Ian Gunn Memorial Award presented to **Murray MacLachlan** in recognition of his services to the Melbourne Science Fiction Club

I accepted the award on behalf of Ditmar Jensen. Then, on Thursday evening, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, I presented his Chronos trophy and citation to him at a gathering of fans at the Rosstown Hotel in Carnegie.



The highlight of Friday evening was the launch of popular SF and fantasy novelist Richard Harland's latest novel *World Shaker* set in the early industrial era. Irrepressible fellow author and mentor Jack Dann did the honours with panache.

The photo opposite shows Jack in full oratorical flight with Richard and his assistant in the background. I wasn't sure why Richard needed an assistant, so I hung around to see if he was going to saw her in half. He didn't, but his animated book reading in melodramatic Victorian music hall style fitted seamlessly into the convention's Steampunk theme, almost overshadowing Jack's inspired shtick



The reading morphed into a cocktail party hosted by the committee that effectively broke any ice that hadn't been melted by Richard's bravura performance. The party could have rocked on 'til lunch but was ruthlessly shut down at 10:00 PM for 'Thank Cthulu You're Here', which turned out to be a fannish variety show where George Ivanov wrangled guest of honour Narelle Harris, Danny Oz, Paul Poulton and Scott Pollard in theatre sports. The audience appreciated the repartee, although many of the puns and sly references passed me by. Rachel Holkner was the judge which was reason enough for her not to contribute her own complement of gags, but I'm sure the real reason was that she was having too much fun listening to the others to bother.

### Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Having joined the majority in contriving to be late for the tutorial on *Introductory Sword Fighting* on Saturday, I sauntered into Bruce Gillespie's *Fanzines* panel. It was sparsely attended but everyone wanted copies of IRS that I had on hand, which renewed my faith in a Bill-loving universe.

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The room was packed for Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's guest of honour speech at 11:00 AM. Quinn likes to tell what she's on about, and she's good at it. She started by drawing a distinction between horror and terror that is worth quoting verbatim because of its descriptive power and depth of ideas.

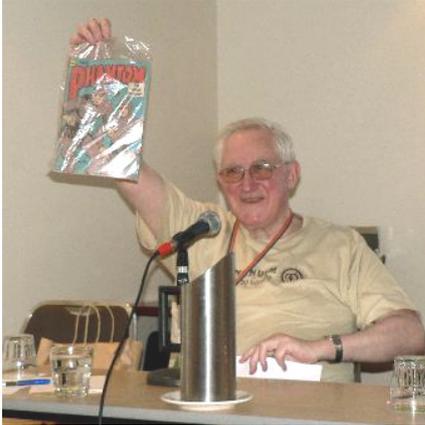
*"The ancient Greeks in their wisdom differentiated between horror - fear of the unknown, and terror - fear of the known. To them there was a qualitative difference between the fear felt when there was a peculiar scratching sound on the side of the house in the middle of the night- horror, and the dread felt as a falling stone was about to break your shoulder or your skull - terror. The person experiencing terror has to deal with an immediate confrontation that is so intense that it becomes rapturous in its most untrammelled form, a rapture that is rarely encountered in horror; in fact, it is the lack of confrontation that tends to increase the fascination that accompanies horrific fear. Although we have largely lost these subtle distinctions in our daily discourse, they do tend to persist in literature."*

Quinn then went on to explore the roots of horror in psychology and storytelling. It wasn't long before she homed in on the theme that has sustained her long series of historical horror novels about the semi-immortal vampire Count Saint-Germain. She maintains that that you can't know where you're going until you know where you've been. For mortals, that usually requires a sense of history and an appreciation of the nature of the past. For writers, such perspectives often depend upon a character capable of observation and participation in events that ripple down through time, a perfect job description for a semi-immortal.

Immortality, she says, is dangerous. "Keep in mind that one of the purposes of the headstone and the tomb is to keep the dead where they belong." It's also dangerous for the semi-immortal, whose continued survival depends upon the living being ignorant of his presence in their midst. The ongoing contrast between the semi-immortal and the living expressed in art and literature dating from the earliest cave paintings is, and always has been, both an affirmation and a reinterpretation of the human condition.

Nor is Quinn timid. She doesn't, for example, shy away from the difficult topic of vampire sexuality. You'll have to read her books to get the flavour of that, but her boldness in venturing where few writers have dared to go before is, I'm sure, one of the reasons for her growing popularity with readers. Like her readers, she is a robust author who enjoys world-building and culture-engineering, and telling stories about the past anchored in a consistent theme and centred on a single character.

On Saturday afternoon, Trevor Clark and I presented a panel on *'A potted history of Australian Comics (the early years)'*. Trevor and I had volunteered our services because we each have collections including examples of early Australian comic strips and comic books, as well as various reference books. The Internet uncovered other valuable reference material, but it was Mervyn Binns that came to our rescue with the 'mother lode' - a copy of the late John Ryan's *'Panel by Panel'*, an illustrated history of Australian comics published in 1979 that remains to this day the most frequently researched authority on the subject in the national archives.



*Bill Wright shows off an original PHANTOM comic*



*Trevor Clark and Merv Binns look at some of their favourites from the past*

From those sources we set up a 'slide show' of what I refer to as sequential art. What else do you call cartoons that tell a story? From their early origins through the heyday of newspaper comic strip supplements in and after the Second World War until the end of the 1970s, we put up each image in turn and stated when and in what newspaper or magazine it was published. Members of the audience joined us in fond personal reminiscence of our boyhood favourites – Captain Atom; Air Hawk – that sparked our interest in science fiction and fantasy. Indeed, Mervyn Binns had so many anecdotes to regale us with that Trevor forthwith cut me out of the conversation (I had said my piece already) and invited Merv on to the panel.

Not all the items were original Australian artwork. Trade and currency restrictions led to a flourishing industry in Australian reprints of American comics. The Aussie versions were better presented - for example, the page-by-page sequence of art panels wasn't broken up by advertisements and the print quality, whether in black & white or colour, was superior to the American originals. 'The Phantom' (by Lee Falk, author of 'Mandrake') is an example of a truly international comic character whose covers in exotic places like Australia, Portugal and Mexico would not have been out of place in mainstream art galleries.

Undoubtedly, the most popular Australian newspaper comic strip was Ginger Meggs drawn by a number of graphic artists over the years. The World War II strips 'Bluey & Curly' and 'Wally and the Major' continued through the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Not least of Australian sequential artists was Stanley John Pitt (1926 – 2002). His first professional publication was 'Anthony Fury', published by Consolidated Press in 1942.



In 1945 Stan Pitt began drawing comic strip advertisements. Associated Newspapers Ltd. liked his work and asked him to produce a science-fiction adventure strip. The result was 'Silver Starr in the Flameworld', which ran in the Sunday Sun until November 1948.

Justin Ackroyd's Fan Fund Auction was notable for the pruning down of its scope and adherence to the time allotted to it. Only donated items whose auction proceeds go to NAFF, GUFF, DUFF or FFANZ were included. If not universally embraced, this new format was overwhelmingly popular.

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The Maskobalo on Saturday evening was, for me and nearly everyone else I spoke to, the highlight of the convention. Over thirty fans took pains to look their best in cleverly designed costumes. I went as a galactic secret agent wearing a brown helmet and mask and a tentacle spy-eye emerging from the neck.

The judges (guests of honour Quinn Yarbrow and Narelle Harris) didn't see fit to dignify my ensemble by the award of a Special Mention, but I am the first to admit that those outfits that did get the nod thoroughly deserved it.



I have to say that Narelle Harris's *Scarlet Tart* satin confection (above right) would have most likely won the costume prize if she hadn't been a judge. She's the quintessential author who is also a fan. I'll have more to say about that when I come to her Guest of Honour speech.



Committee member Emma Hespa Mann and her tech team did a superb job with the sound and lighting; and Guttermonkey's props created the Steampunk ambience, including giant painted cardboard cogs (that we *must* save for future continuum conventions) and a number of strategically placed lanterns;

DJ Omega's offerings were pitched at just the right sound level. Their skill with the equipment kept us on the dance floor almost continuously. There is nothing in my memory to compare with the sight of over thirty people in Steampunk outfits doing whatever it came into their heads to do to Monkey Magic music.

The dance floor was still well populated at midnight. I had long since gone home, but I understand that the rest of the committee repaired to the Cocoon Bar for, er, conversation and it was verrrry late early before some of them got back to their rooms.

### Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009

I arrived bright and early for my 10:00 AM 'Norma K Hemming Award' panel on Sunday morning. Accompanying me on the panel were Dr Sean McMullen, who had done most of the original research on the life and times of Norma Hemming, and Dr Gillian Polack from Canberra.

Norma Kathleen Hemming was a pioneer feminist SF author in the 1950s who wrote for the Sydney-based pulp magazine *Thrills Incorporated* and participating in the fan scene. She was a founding member of the femme fan group Vertical Horizons and a member of the Acturian Players, a science fiction theatrical group for whom she wrote and acted.

In January 2009, the Australian Science Fiction Foundation (ASFF) instituted a prestigious new fan award in her honour, called the **Norma K Hemming Award**, to mark excellence in the exploration of themes of race, gender, class and sexuality in the form of science fiction and fantasy or related art work or media.



At the Natcon in Adelaide in June 2009, the Norma K Hemming Award was embraced by the academic community but other fans were lukewarm. It was different here, and all due to Sean McMullen. He brought the issues to life in a way I've never been able to and, in no time, we had five volunteers forming a group to stage a reading of one of Norma Hemming's five plays *The Matriarchy of Renok* with special effects and musical accompaniment at **Aussiecon 4** (68<sup>th</sup> Worldcon in Melbourne on 2-6 September 2010) where the inaugural trophy will be presented.

The Norma K Hemming Award is a jury award. Entry conditions will shortly be released. For the entry form and submission guideline, please refer to the ASFF website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~asff/>.

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Narelle Harris's guest of honour speech was delivered immediately after the Hemming Award panel. What inspired the Continuum 5 committee to invite Narelle to be a guest of honour was publication in early 2008 of her 'young adult vampire' novel *The Opposite of Life* (Pulp Fiction Press, 2007) set in Melbourne. This fresh and original take on the vampire genre written by a local fan with a track record of successful publishing who has digs in Melbourne's central business district and seems to have sussed out nearly every interesting nook and cranny in the city afforded an opportunity we couldn't afford to pass up.

Narelle has done it tough, having at various times taught English in Egypt and Poland and tried her hand as a playwright, songwriter, actress, editor, public servant, kitchen hand, telemarketer and crime/thriller writer in her efforts to keep body and soul together. Her first novel was the crime/thriller *Crime by Night* (2004) that was nominated for a Ned Kelly Award. *Witch Honour* (2005) was shortlisted for the George Turner Prize for Science Fiction and Fantasy in 1998. Its sequel *Witch Faith* was published in 2007 and was shortlisted for the same award in 2009.

She is obviously at home in the young adult vampire sub-genre which, I venture to say but stand to be corrected, she might have invented. A sneak preview of her sequel to *The Opposite of Life* titled *Walking Shadows* appeared in the Continuum 5 Programme Book with superb illustrations by Audrey Fox. The story line is ultimately appealing, about a young woman who becomes, in effect, house mother to little lost teenage vampires. Buy this book when it comes out. Resistance is futile.

Narelle's speech was a less structured affair than Quinn Yarbro's and there was much give and take with the audience. I was able to disclose a high point of Melbourne's café culture that Narelle failed to mention. That's Juliette's Champagne Bar on a balcony overlooking Postal Hall on level 1 of the revamped GPO building on the Elizabeth Street corner of Bourke Street Mall

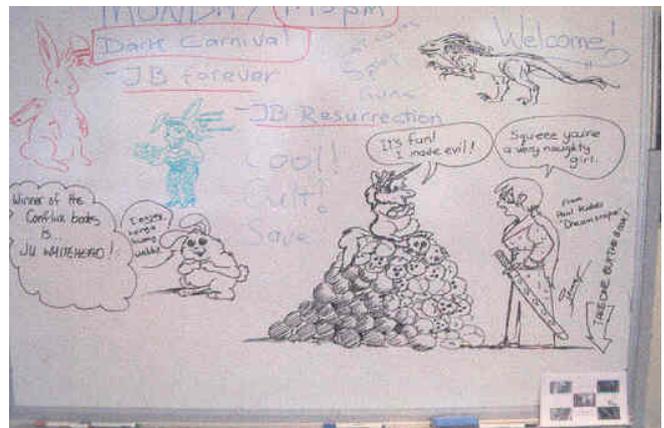
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I mooched around for the rest of the convention, sampling the odd programme item for ten minutes or so, then sidling out of the room to chat in the fan lounge or inspect wares in the dealers' room. Whilst in the latter, I renewed acquaintance with Jenner, a physician who draws medical based comic strips populated with talking animals. His regular strips on the website [www.docrat.com.au](http://www.docrat.com.au) are drawn from his experiences with patients and staff.

Jenner is no stranger to Melbourne conventions. Opposite is a photograph I took of the committee whiteboard that Jenner took over at Continuum 3 in 2007. At that convention, he drew caricatures of most of the notable fans who stayed long enough in any one place to serve as unwitting subjects for his artistic muse. The same thing happened to at least one fan at this convention but Alan Baxter, at least, was asked to sit for his pen portrait.

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The Continuum Foundation was so pleased with the success of Continuum 5 that it has decided to do it again with Continuum 6 in the same place, *Ether*, under the two Mercure hotels at the corner of Swanston and Little Bourke Streets, Melbourne, on 26-28 February 2010. The convention theme is 'Future Tense'.



**Bill Wright**

## Clerihew corner

*Dennis Callegari is at his scholarly best in these offerings...* Ed.

--

The following preamble's a bit long, but it's worth persevering to the end for the clerihew...

Some weeks ago, I read *God of Speed* by Luke Davies – a biographical novel about the billionaire Howard Hughes ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard\\_Hughes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Hughes)). I say a biographical novel, but really it concentrates almost exclusively on female movie stars, plane crashes and addiction to prescription drugs – with the drug addiction seemingly a result of being highly medicated after plane crashes. Well written, though.

Some things to note about Howard Hughes (and there are many more) include:

- He was a bit of a tinkerer as a young boy, building engines from spare parts.
- He was still a teenager when he inherited the family fortune, which was built on his father's invention of a new type of drill bit for oil wells. The fortune came about because the elder Hughes cleverly rented his drill bits rather than selling them.
- Almost immediately, Hughes became a player in Hollywood, producing some very successful movies and dating a small constellation of movie stars.
- He held several aviation records, including one for flying around the world (though admittedly he took a shortcut by not going a "great circle" route).
- At different times, he gained control of businesses such as the RKO movie studio, TWA airlines, and several Las Vegas casinos. The story goes that one of his casino purchases was made specifically to prevent Frank Sinatra from playing there.
- He made a deal with Richard Nixon to bail Nixon's brother out of debt. When this became public, it harmed Nixon's bid for the 1960 presidential election. (If not for Hughes, might JFK never have become US President?)

In later life, Hughes' obsessive-compulsive behaviour (and his addictions) consumed him. Towards the end, he shut himself away from everyone but his copy of the movie *Ice Station Zebra* and his cohort of Mormon bodyguards. Contrary to popular belief at the time, it appears that there was nothing particularly sinister about Hughes being surrounded by a bunch of Latter Day Saints. It just seems that he trusted them not to cheat him.

Hence the clerihew:

*Those wanting to abuse  
Howard Hughes  
Had to lodge their complaints  
With his Latter Day Saints.*

-----

At birth, Karl Malden (1912-2009) was given the name **Mladen George Sekulovich**, but he changed his name at 22 so that it would fit on a theatrical marquee.

According to Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl\\_Malden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Malden)):

*Malden often found ways to say "Sekulovich" in films and television shows in which he appears. For example, as General Omar Bradley in Patton, as his troops slog their way through enemy fire in Sicily, Malden says "Hand me that helmet, Sekulovich" to another soldier. In Dead Ringer, as a police detective in the squad room, Malden tells another detective: "Sekulovich, gimme my hat." In Fear Strikes Out, Malden, playing Jimmy Piersall's father John, introduces Jimmy to a baseball scout named Sekulovich. In Birdman of Alcatraz, as a prison warden touring the cell block, Malden recites a list of inmates' names, including Sekulovich. Malden's father was not pleased, as he told his son "Mladen, no Sekulovich has ever been in prison!" Perhaps the most notable usage of his real name was in the TV series The Streets of San Francisco. Malden's character in the program, Mike Stone, employed a legman (played by Art Metrano) with that name, who did various errands. Also, in On the Waterfront, in which Malden plays the priest, among the names of the officers of Local 374 called out in the courtroom scene is Mladen Sekulovich, Delegate.*

As you can tell from that excerpt, Malden appeared in quite a few A-grade movies, though seldom in the starring role. Many will remember him playing the character Lt. Mike Stone of the San Francisco Police Department in the TV series "*The Streets of San Francisco*" opposite the youthful Michael Douglas.

*Karl Malden  
Felt kinda walled-in  
Till he made San Francisco thug-less  
With the aid of Michael Douglas.*

-----

The following excursion doesn't lead to a clerihew at all, but if there WAS one it might be:

*The poet Horace  
Loathed Nine Men's Morris  
But loved raising Hades  
With Roman ladies.*

Eugene Field (1850-1895), though often called The Children's Poet, was not entirely defined by that nickname – as you may be able to tell from the poem below. He lived a little too early, but I have no doubt that some years later he would have been a fine clerihewist (clerihewer?)

Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene\\_Field](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_Field)) quotes him as the author of one of the finest put-downs in theatrical history:

*"Reviewing an actor named Creston Clarke in the title role of King Lear, Field commented of Clarke's performance that he "played the king as if under momentary apprehension that somebody else was about to play the ace".*

The clerihew above steals shamelessly (shamelessly, I tell you) from THIS poem from Eugene Field. (Note on the poem: Massic wine, according to Andrew Dalby's "*Food in the Ancient World from A to Z*", was one of the best Roman wines in the early days of the Empire (30BC-70 AD) [See details at left of the poem].

*THE TRUTH ABOUT HORACE (by Eugene Field)*

**Massic wine** (Latin *Massicum*) from the slopes of Mons Massicus at the southern extremity of Latium in central Italy. Sinuessa was a centre of trade in **Massic wine**. This was one of the best names in wine for roughly a century, from perhaps 30 BC to AD 70. Massic was counted by Columella, in the mid first century AD, as one of the four supreme wines. What became of it afterwards? It may be that the name of Falernian, a name which sold more wine, was stretched northwards from the adjacent vineyards on the northern edge of Campania and that Massic ceased to be considered a separate appellation. In some later sources the two seem synonymous (Columella omits Falernian from his list of four). At any rate, after about AD 100 Massic is not mentioned at all. It was apparently forgotten by the date of Servius's commentary on Vergil.

Vergil, *Georgics* 2.143 with Servius *ad l.*; Horace, *Satires* 2.4.51, *Odes* 1.1.19, 2.7.21, 3.21.5; Columella *DA* 3.8.5; Pliny *NH* 3.60, 14.62-4 with André *ad l.*; Silius Italicus 7.207; Statius, *Silvae* 4.3.64; Martial 13.111, *al.*; Florus 1.115; *CIL* 15.1554.

Tchernia 1986 esp. pp. 283, 342.

<i>It is very aggravating</i>	<i>We have always thought 'em lazy;</i>
<i>To hear the solemn prating</i>	<i>Now we adjudge 'em crazy!</i>
<i>Of the fossils who are stating</i>	<i>Why, Horace was a daisy</i>
<i>That old Horace was a prude;</i>	<i>That was very much alive!</i>
<i>When we know that with the ladies</i>	<i>And the wisest of us know him</i>
<i>He was always raising Hades,</i>	<i>As his Lydia verses show him,--</i>
<i>And with many an escapade his</i>	<i>Go, read that virile poem,--</i>
<i>Best productions are imbued.</i>	<i>It is No. 25.</i>

<i>There's really not much harm in a</i>	<i>He was a very owl, sir,</i>
<i>Large number of his carmina,</i>	<i>And starting out to prowl, sir,</i>
<i>But these people find alarm in a</i>	<i>You bet he made Rome howl, sir,</i>
<i>Few records of his acts;</i>	<i>Until he filled his date;</i>
<i>So they'd squelch the muse caloric,</i>	<i>With a Massic-laden ditty</i>
<i>And to students sophomoric</i>	<i>And a classic maiden pretty,</i>
<i>They'd present as metaphoric</i>	<i>He painted up the city,</i>
<i>What old Horace meant for facts.</i>	<i>And Mæcenas paid the freight!</i>

**Dennis Callegari**

## Update on the connectivity issue

In IRS August 2009, I wrote about rivalry between Apple and Palm over access to its music and media store iTunes. Palm used to be the leader in hand-held personal organisers. But now they've tried to make their Pre into a communications device by programming it to trick iTunes software into recognising it as an Apple music player. That allowed the Pre to transfer files between the phone and a personal computer.

Apple hadn't exactly played fair, having taken steps to ensure that its iPhone is the only communications device that can link with iTunes. By doing so it broke standards put in place to foster interoperability between computers and devices using USB connections. Meanwhile, it looks as if Palm's traditional customer base is stuck with their old T5 Palm units until marketers and designers start listening to customers to find out what they really need.

Palm Pre



Apple iPod



vs

Now Eric Lindsay, who knows a thing or two about communications technology despite being long retired, reports that Palm has lost the challenge to be allowed to have their Palm Pre pretend to be an iPod for linking with iTunes – see <http://digitaldaily.allthingsd.com/20090922/usb-if-slaps-palm/>. He says that Palm will need to write their own sync program to parse the iTunes Music Library.xml file, just like anyone else needs to do.

Apple has published an API for programmers wishing to access iTunes content. It's easier to use from a Macintosh, where iTunes is scriptable by anyone via AppleScript. However they have a Windows API available as COM.

Several companies do the right thing, eg. Mark Space <http://www.markspace.com/pressrelease/090717.html> who says, "*The Missing Sync utilizes APIs provided by Apple to properly and validly access music and pictures in iTunes and iPhoto.*" Other phone companies provide syncing services; for example, Nokia do so.

Palm has been totally wrong on this the whole way through - probably as a consequence of being broke and facing deadlines in getting their phone going. I would guess they did not have the resources to write the sync software (they've also dropped all their other sync software).

If you get the impression from the above that communications technology companies have forgotten to find out what customers want in their rivalry to get an edge on integration of services, you are probably right.

Loyal Palm customers who were looking to the company to continue to support their old T5 Palm personal organisers are left lamenting. All they want is a state-of-the-art personal organiser and they are utterly indifferent as to whether or not it can link into any other device for information downloads. Their needs have been forgotten and that is inexcusable – unconscionable, even. The sooner major players in the industry come to the realisation that they should let the customer lead in formulating development strategies the better.

**Bill Wright**

## Stefan Zone



### USER-PAYS SOCIETY, AND PAYS ... AND PAYS

I'm finally back on track after doing a reasonable performance of a Workaholic these past few months. It seemed every week had 6 Mondays and one Sunday (only because it was the day before another Monday).

I never knew how far, and in which direction, our society had progressed in this short space of time, until I started reading some recent news articles:

\* Following on from the tsunami of bashings and killings in Victoria, the Police Force and State Government have basically told Victorians we have to do our own police work because of a lack of resources. I've been doing this sort of thing for years - telling people off for putting their feet on train seats and intervening in the fight between the two drunks and the druggie. However, I didn't realise how much police work I'd taken on until they gave me a homicide to investigate on top of the five cold cases they gave me yesterday.

\* This week, Victorians have been told that we have to be prepared to fight our own fires due to a lack of firefighters and trucks. I could have guessed this after having to put out a few bin fires on the way to the train station last summer. This summer I'll be better prepared - my backpack contains a 2 Litre water bottle and a bicycle pump.

\* Next week I'm prepared for the Ambulance service and doctors to come out and say Victorians need to heal themselves because they can't rely on an ambulance being available, obtaining a doctors' appointment or securing a hospital bed.

\* Then there will be the taxi, train and tram services that will admit they have no idea how to transport people around Melbourne, so we'll have to arrange our own travel.

If only the Government would come out and say we have to govern ourselves, we'd be able to pay off KRuddy's recent free money giveaways.

### LATEST AMERICAN COMPANY HITS OUR SHORES

This week saw the opening of the first store of yet another fat ... err, 'large' ... American company that has landed on our shores with such a thud that the shock waves are just subsiding. Yes, Costco has started trading at Docklands. Nice and convenient for those people who live in their high-rises a street away, not so convenient for those who have to lug all their purchases back home to the ever-receding suburbs.

The store is not for the faint hearted - the land mass it sits on could hold a fully functioning suburb, so getting around requires a moped with trailer, a road map and a guide (at a small cost, of course). Already this week, there have been

search parties sent out looking for lost people last seen near aisle 465. The search party is expected to arrive in the area sometime early next week.

This isn't just another of these stores that promises 'Everything under the one roof' but fails to deliver on the 'everything' - Costco literally has EVERYTHING on sale from a teaspoon to a car to diamonds to politicians. The butcher on site even has live cattle walking around in a paddock out back.

The only problem you face (apart from the cost) is where to store your purchases as Costco sells in bulk. They don't just stock measly packets of 18 rolls of toilet paper like Coles and Safeway do -

they sell pallets containing a year's supply. If anyone ever bought the house they have for sale, where in their existing house would they store it ?

At least they haven't gone down the path of Ikea, where everything is squashed flat in neat slimline oblong boxes 'for your convenience'. If you ever visit Ikea, follow the below steps to pay in cash 'for their convenience'.

1. Cut up exact cash to cover purchases into little pieces.
2. Lose a few pieces

### BRING OUT YOUR CURE-ALLS, BRING OUT YOUR CURE-ALLS

There was a recent news report stating that people should clean out their medicine cabinets and get rid of any out-of-date items.

If you do have out-of-date items, I can take some of them off your hands. Our family doesn't use anything unless the use-by-date is prior to 2000 or it was made prior to the introduction of use-by-dates.

Our cabinet is chockers full of old lotions and cure-alls, some of which I suspect Mum's Great, Great Grandmother, servant to Lord and Lady Muck, brought over to Australia on the Endeavour. Dad may have salvaged others from the side of the road.

I still use 'The Ointment'. Those were the days when there was only one ointment, so the name said it all. It apparently cured everything from an itchy foot to the bubonic plague, not that our family has found the need to confirm the latter claim. Yet. But just in case there is an outbreak, I'm confident of a full recovery.

### THE DA BRUMBY CODE

The Victorian government has worked out how to help Victorians this bushfire season - they've come up with a higher-alert warning for people - CODE RED.

I thought a Code Red used to be used when a child threw up in a supermarket aisle, but it has now been hijacked by Premier Brumby in his response to the ongoing Royal Commission. What will supermarkets use now ? Code Chunky ?

Having another threat level is so reassuring, because the 5 we had before really were insufficient. A sixth was needed. I'm tipping more will be added. After the next deadly fire season, and before the next Royal Commission, maybe

3. Put remaining pieces into an old piece of plastic that used to hold a mattress

4. Place into a flat cardboard package similar to your current purchases

5. Find some instructions written in Chinese from an old appliance you no longer have and throw them in, stating that the instructions will help them assemble the money

Oh, I almost forgot the most important thing - Include an Allen Key so they can put it all together.

Another family favourite is Dr Thars ointment. This can extract even the most deeply imbedded wood splinter from your body, but don't use too much else your bones start to come out. Or so we were warned when we were young. It can also be used to get rusty nails out of wood, but it can't be wasted as we've only got another 2 tins.

While some of the claims made on these lotions may seem far-fetched, it might just mean that we haven't yet had the necessity to test them. I mean, none of us have had the need to regenerate a limb.

In other families, when kids leave home to get married or move elsewhere, their parents traditionally give them a start-up kit, such as a set of plates, cutlery, etc. Our family's start-up kit includes some of the family medicines - a dab of The Ointment, a smidgen of Dr Thars, and more.

If you discover you have similar family history lotions hidden away in your medicine cabinet, don't throw them away - either hand them over to me, or bequeath them to your kids. You never know when the next Black Plague will strike.

CODE BIGGER THAN BEN HUR can be added and then CODE WORLD ABOUT TO END the season after.

The number of codes is inversely proportioned to the amount of work the government is doing to actually prevent the threat from occurring in the first place. It wouldn't hurt for someone to do a bit of spring cleaning around the state before summer, but apparently this goes against the mantra of the 'green' religion that's taken over the world at the moment.

*"Who removed that twig from the roadside ? A bug was about to set up a delicate eco-system there. For shame!"* Want to cut down a tree?

Land sakes alive! Murderer! Trees are humans too, you know! Oh, it's diseased and may fall at any time? Well, in this case, fill out these 500 permits and have these 20 studies undertaken. We'll also be sending out 40 representatives from the various 'key stakeholder' groups to inspect the tree before any work can be undertaken.

### VICTORIA, THE PLACE TO PANIC

“WARNING, WARNING: CODE RED TAPE, CODE RED TAPE”

The warning shrieks over the radio to the 10 % of the Victorian population that have their radios turned on, only half of which can understand English.

The same warning blasts from TV's to another 25% of Victorians that are half watching, most of whom are annoyed that the warning has interrupted their viewing of yet another reality TV show.

The majority of the other 65% of the population are blissfully unaware of the impending doom as they go about listening to their i-pods too loud, playing video games or not even partaking of the media.

A small portion of people are (un)fortunate enough to live in a 'no coverage' area of Victoria where not even a politician's empty promise can penetrate.

Soon the warning spreads until the entire state is at ...

PANIC STATIONS !!!!!!!!

Where to go ?

Well, we've just been told the entire state's unsafe, but who wants to move to NSW ? Queensland ? Not a hope one day, hopeless the next. OK, so

Oh, what's this ? The warning has been cancelled.

Apparently under union rules they can't issue a warning on a Union Picnic holiday.

Code RED ? Code RED TAPE more like it.

Aaaahh, inertia sets in.

The alert level is lowered. All is well, for now. Throw another log on the fire.

let's stay in Victoria. Besides, we don't have enough time to get that far.

What about ...

\* Fleeing to the hills ? No, too bushfire prone. Besides, the greenies wouldn't allow people to disturb the area for fear that the Common Ground Gnat may suffer trauma.

\* Fleeing to the seaside ? No, apparently global warming will see all the seaside places covered in water by the time we get there. Oooooohhh, The Seas, The Seas, THEY'RE RISING !!!

\* Escaping by road ? No, traffic's banked up after another B-quintuple truck overturned.

\* Catching a train out of the area ? Are you kidding ? All trains are cancelled because their air conditioning can't take the heat. Besides, have you seen the latest crime statistics for public transport users ? You'll be lucky to get out alive.

\* Go to a public refuge centre ? No, they were closed by councils years ago.

\* Meet at the police station ? Sorry, not staffed.

\* Go to the city ? Not unless you want to be bashed or stabbed.

Thank goodness for that !

### THE TECHNICOLOUR-LOW MEDAL COUNT

And welcome to another Technicolour-low Medal Count where we've turned what was a night of celebration of the best and fairest in Football into a night of boorish behaviour by thugs who shouldn't even be eligible to win the Technicolour-low Medal accompanied by the breast and fairest, most of whom wouldn't have a clue about the game. Not that you should be worried about seeing boorish behaviour because most of the night we'll

be showing close-ups of what their 'girlfriends' are hardly wearing.

Players have started arriving for this, the night of nights, where even a convicted drug felon and a 6-times-convicted drink driver remain contestants for what was the Best and Fairest. We cross now to the puce carpet where Jo-Beth Gigglebean is interviewing players and their hangers-on as they arrive.

JBG: "Hihihi, hi here. Here comes Ditzzy, arm in arm with Yobbo. Hi Ditzzy, what are you doing?"

D: "I got told we're going out for a drink. There are a lot of people waiting to get into this nightclub. Lucky I'm with Yobbo because we're going straight inside and if anyone gets in his way, he just thumps them. Oh, is that a microphone? Can we do karaoke? I'm good at karaoke."

JBG: "Hihihi, no Ditzzy. I need the microphone to do my job which is, um, which is standing here talking to people. Here comes Snorter and Druggie. Oh, and there's Showgirl and Showoff. What's that you're almost wearing, Showgirl?"

SG: "It's a new number called Wardrobe Malfunction Number 5. It's guaranteed to malfunction as soon as a camera is pointing my way, or I get my money back. Which I will anyway, because I'll return it tomorrow and say I didn't use it."

JBG: "Hihihi, oh, Showgirl! Here's GoldDigger with No-Idea. Hi, GoldDigger!"

GD: "Stay away from him. He's mine! I saw him first."

JBG: "Hihihi, No, GoldDigger. I'm not after his money. I only want to talk to you about No-Idea's chances for winning the Technicolour-low?"

GD: "If he doesn't win it, he's dumped - \$500,000 a year or no \$500,000 a year. I'll move on to the winner."

JBG: "Hihihi. Well, good luck. I think I can see Blonde Bimbo coming along with NoHoper. Miss Bimbo, over here!"

BB: "Hihihihi, hi Jo-Beth. I didn't know you played football!"

JBG: "Hihihi. No, silly. I do my hair on the weekend. I like your giggle"

BB: "Hihihihi. Thank you. Your giggle seems familiar."

JBG: "Hihihi. So do you know a lot about football?"

BB: "Hihihihi. Well, I know it involves a foot and a ball! Hihihihi"

JBG: "Hihihi."

BB: "Hihihihi."

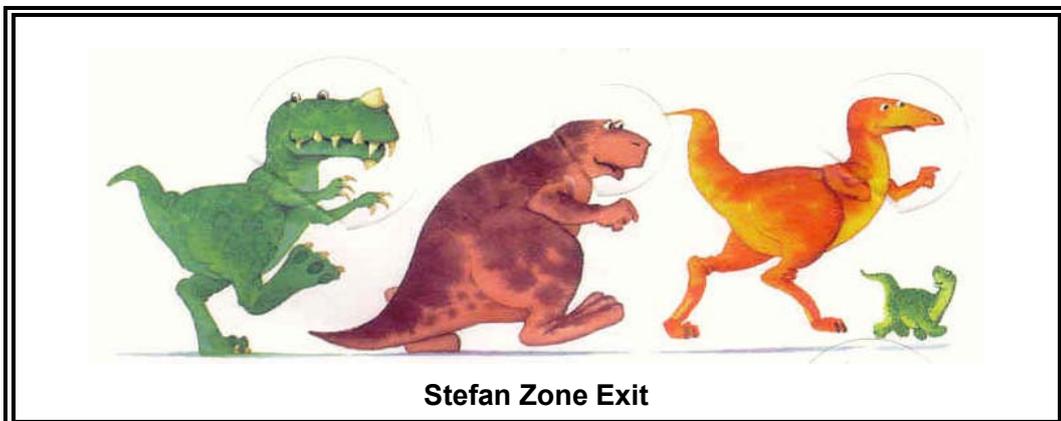
JBG: "Hihihi."

(much later)

JBG: "Hihihi. Well, that's all we have time for because the count has finished and someone has won. I don't know who because I've been giggling with Blonde Bimbo for over four hours straight. To find out what went on during the count, we now cross to some pre-recorded stuff featuring our roving undercover footbrawler, Thug."

T: "GET @\$%\*%, YOU #\$&&\*! I'LL KNOW WHEN I'VE HAD TOO MANY DRINKS. WHAT ARE YA, A @\$^%? WHAT THE !@^\$ ARE YOU LOOKING AT?..."

*Stefan*

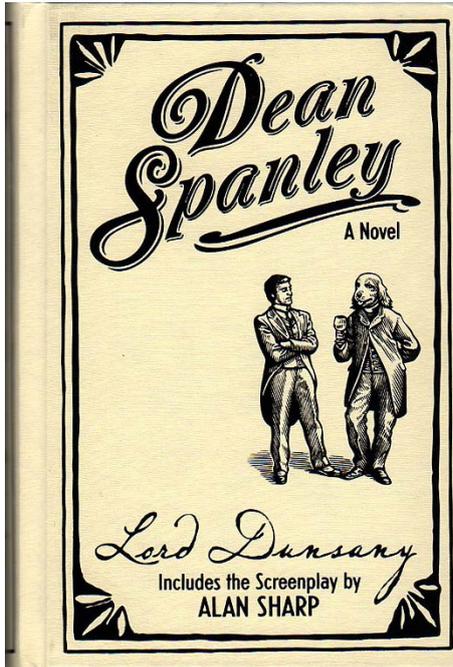


## Animadversions on IRS June 2009 cover notes

The President of Anzapa, Dan McCarthy, took issue with Ditmar on aspects of his interpretation of the cover graphic, specifically in relation to supposed flaws in the works of H P Lovecraft.

He agreed with Ditmar that *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is one of the best of its kind, but he was less sure about *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*, thinking it something of a flawed masterpiece. He thought that it's mostly because Lovecraft at the time he wrote it was still shaking off the influence of Lord Dunsany so the latter's cuteness mixes rather uneasily with Lovecraft's own emerging style. He went on to say that Lovecraft's settings were some of the best he's encountered in Fantasy but the adjectives seemed to be a little out of control.

Dick's response follows...



*"I must agree with most of Dan's comments regarding Lovecraft's "The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath", with a minor exception. It is early Lovecraft - but published only posthumously - and so will bear traces of writers which influenced him: and Lord Dunsany was definitely one such. However, I'm drawn to the story because of the Dunsany influence - the journey back to the fields we know from the land of dreams. And Lovecraft's notorious 'out of control' use of adjectives is a failing in some (perhaps too many) of his stories. In fact, it is one of the clubs used to cudgel Lovecraft by those who see his failings but not his strengths.*

*My quibble is Dan's description of Dunsany's prose as 'cute'. My feeling is that it is never cute, but, in fact, often witty. However, to take a recent example in the public eye - that of the film version of Dunsany's 'My Talks with Dean Spanley' - to some (even many?) people the idea of a churchman - a Dean, nonetheless - remembering his past life as a dog when imbibing too much imperial Tokay, will be excessively cute. For me, though, since I am a devoted dog-lover, it was just a plot device and over which I had no trouble in willingly suspending disbelief. By the way, the film is one of the best released in 2009.*

Agreed, Dick. The film *Dean Spanley* stars Peter O'Toole in one of his finest performances. Recommended.

## From Steampunk to the Real Thing

Inquisitive readers of this excellent journal should suss out <http://www.steam-fair.co.uk/> about the **Great Dorset Steam Fair** that's held on a 600 acre site at South Down, Tarrant Hinton, near Blandford Forum in Dorset, England, and is regularly attended by over 250,000 visitors from all over the world. It's also a music festival, (five massive marquees of live music), a craft fair, market, the biggest display of vintage transport in the country and the largest fairground you'll ever see.

The fantastic showman's engine line up at the Great Dorset Steam Fair is world renowned and, together with the rides in the Old Time Fairground including two sets of Gallopers (carousels), Steam Yachts, Chair-o-Planes, Noah's Ark, Skid, Cakewalk, Big Wheel and a Light House Slip, vouchsafe an exalting experience enhanced by jolly strains emanating from pipe and steam organs that were originally (and some that still are) integral parts of the innards of those fabulous fairground rides. SF fandom is a broad church with a cultural reach to be found in no other global community. Aren't we privileged to belong to it?

*Bill Wright*

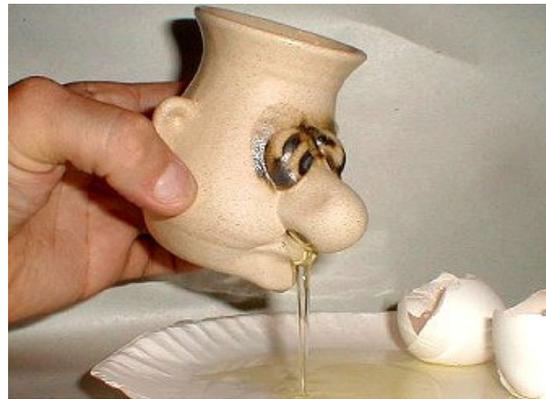
## Egg separator

The world's grossest cooking aid

Peter Petrie's Egg Separator available from [www.stupid.com](http://www.stupid.com)

It's the world's most perfectly awful kitchen accessory in the shape of a hand-crafted ceramic head sporting a quizzical expression and Jimmy Durante's nose.

To use it, crack an egg into the separator and tilt it forward.



Whilst the yolk is blocked by the nose, the albumen drips through the nostrils and into your bowl. Peter Petrie's Egg Separator is well made by skilled American potters. Use it whenever you need egg yolks or egg whites for omelettes, cakes, or other recipes.

Oh it's tacky. It's gross. It's pointless.  
But what else do you EGGspect from Stupid.com?