

# *Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment*

**Vol. 1 No. 8, November 2004**

**For ANZAPA issue number 222**

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Cover – Candidate photo (8X) printed on the back of an my Australian Democrats Watson How-To-Vote card

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Back Cover – Garry's Australian Democrat, Watson HTV

## **Editorial**

At the moment I have TBSE editions No. 7, No. 8 and No. 9 in various stages of preparation. My ideal would be to conduct my ANZAPA contributions as a six times a year conversation at eight or nine week intervals, with timely mailing comments, slice of life elements and notes the Science, Astronomy and Science Fiction events that I have attended over the last two months. To be committed to and to meet the commitment of a short SF story every second month is an ideal worth aiming for.

This issue No. 8 is being prepared for mailing well ahead of issue No. 7, as I want to clear any minac issues well before the deadlines for ANZAPA 222. It might take some time to finish Issue No 7, as I have dug a fairly deep hole for my self with it's half completed contents.

Thus far into November I am still really only playing catch-up with matters that I had to postpone for the duration of the 2004 Australian Federal election campaign. With fair winds and good luck you may still be receiving issue 7 with this, as it is my hope to get it out in time and mailed as a second helping to Bruce in time to meet the December deadline. This done I would then hope to be able to spend most of the December to January down time working on a concise and well crafted TBSE No. 9 and having it ready for printing / mailing well ahead of the deadlines for ANZAPA 223.

### **TBSE No. 6**

The printing and collation of TBSE No. 6 was defective. As a consequence of workplace change I ended up using two printers to do the 40-ish copies and half way through I discovered that one was auto collating and the other was not. So I had to disassemble the lot then try to re-re-collate the two 'ends' of the zine with an extended session of walk round the table style manual collation. This explains why some copies were jumbled up, as has been noted in several of the mailing comments. To have scrapped the lot and re-done the job properly would have delayed mailing by a week.

Hope to see you at some time soon, maybe at a Sydney Freecon?

Garry P Dalrymple

**Mailing comments for ANZAPA  
issue # 221 of October 2004**

Comment on the following Mailing comments. In the following pages you will notice that the zine titles are underlined and listed in OBO order. If your zine's title is in **bold** then you had something to say to me last time. I have also tried to underline the topic of your responses to my earlier zine. I hope this form of organising mailing comments makes it easier for you to find the points of common interest that we share as you do a first quick read through of this issues conglomeration of zines.

Anzapapol 2004: The Results – David Grigg

WOT! NO VOTES FOR ME! – Serves me right. I suppose I should have voted myself, but I was a bit distracted by other sorts of voting issues.

Everyday Practical Magic – David Cumber

Yes it is surprising how the troubles encountered by the celestial among us are so .... Human. You would think that truly cosmic entities with a galactic world view would be concerned by higher concerns, sort of like a combination of Dr Who and the Dali Lama? Through the Australian Skeptics and Astronomy Associations I have encountered much of what masquerades a 'New Age Thought', pale and insipid stuff usually, completely blown out of the water by good (or even routine) SF.

Rhubarb: The Lake – John and Diane Fox

It is very good to see another 'water themed' ANZAPA contribution. Sun and Smoke dried Cocoa beans are just the local method for preventing the beans from going rancid before they reach Northern Hemisphere markets and manufacturers.

On the Horny Goat weed man, I have a photo of him in the kitchen of an Annandale party standing next to a fat bloke in a Star Trek Next Gen. Uniform (Me).

From the Sydney Futurian meetings I was aware that Diane had been unwell, but I had assumed they were unconnected bouts. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

Intermittent Muse 6 (Reality Module 40)

– Michael F. Green

Read the rest of your contribution with interest but no comments at this time.

Megatheriums for Breakfast 42 – David Grigg

The Da Vinci Code was reviewed in the Anglican newspaper, criticised for factual flaws rather than for sins against orthodoxy, it just not being evangelical to shout 'heretic' any more when there are gay clergy and women priests to pay out on I guess. Have not read the book, but I am familiar with the 'Jesus' 'bloodline' story. Like

most myths of long standing it has over time served differing purposes as the influential of the times required. I have tried to listen to the Pompeii dramatisation as played on Radio National some months back and might get into Audio books if I was walking Mystique more frequently. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

Necessity 60: He who would be Valiant

– Jack R. Herman

Odd you should mention that, but through an interest in Astronomy I used to refer to 'Ben and Debbie' my one time pair of Basenjjs as 'Phobos and Deimos' (Fear and Loathing) the two dogs of War / Mars, (also 'sweetness' and 'light' as each was neither). Not a bad pair of nick names for a pair of Mars red-ish and white (polar caps) dogs of not of this world behaviour patterns. They both now hunt on the Elysian Fields.

The Democrat preference deal occurred after the Greens-ALP preference exchange. No political party 'gives away' preferences, there is an agreed exchange, I'll put you higher than X if you put me higher than Y. The 'deal' only comes into effect as the lesser party's sub quotas are re-distributed i.e. in NSW the Australian Democrats (2.11%) probably received the FF (0.54%) preferences while in Victoria it may have flowed the other way, after Fred Nile's vote and the Liberal fragment had put FF ahead of Democrats then the Greens. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

Panopticon 26 – Dan McCarthy

The Thoat rider cover does not match my Barsoomian expectations, I mind read Barsoom as a horizon to horizon red dirt sea bottom plains (clearer views of the twin towers of Helium etc.) and Thoats as an eight legged taller than a horse shaped thing. So the mountain pass and the dinosaur like drawings are 'out'.

See the Editorial for the pages mix up. Sorry if the meeting notes seem a bit cryptic, a previous ANZAPAn comment was that they were too long, can't please everyone I guess. The Star of Bethlehem is just one datum of the irreconcilability of the ancient to the modern mindset. Almost every year in newspapers there is an announcement of the discovery of a 'true' explanation of the Star of Bethlehem. The exact text of the bible was never ever meant to be a true account, it is what you write after the event to add explanation and amplification to the 'meaning' of the bible i.e. in two of the gospels Jesus rides into Jerusalem for a final time on a donkey (a man of peace) and on an untamed colt (a conqueror) both meanings are 'true', which one is correct is irrelevant. As for the APA I can't really complain, I

haven't yet managed to settle on a consistent style. I was expecting a bit more 'Secret Master of Fandom' stuff, SF speculation, con reports and comments. Could well have been balloons, from 20 years of Skeptics and Astronomy clubs I have seen so often that 'belief' is the precursor to an event that will be interpreted as a UFO sighting. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

### Land of 10,000 Loons – Jeanne Mealy

*For my views on APAs*, see my response to Panopticon 8. 88, 91 and 95 Fahrenheit is a Heat wave? Snort, what in mid winter, 40 to 45 Celsius is a Heat wave!

*The Minnesota State fair* sounds a lot like the Royal Easter (Sydney) Show, the fan famous prohibition for Sydney having a first half of the year long weekend con. The *cars placed in trees* were always old to give the impression that they had been parked their some time ago and left unattended long enough for the tree to grow up and through them, possibly an urban expression of the Australian obsession with big animal sculptures as a local land mark. *Skippy bins* are 'skips' large metal bins delivered outside renovation sites to hold builders waste etc. – a prime source of really useful stuff that might come in handy one day - to fill a bloke's garage.

The Sydney Darwin day was a celebration of Charles Darwin's birthday and an 'evolutionary fight back' event to counter the Creationist heresy.

The '*Eta Carinid*' is indeed a 'prize', mid fifties/sixties and an heir (we are told) to great wealth. Might be some deep family trauma, or just attention seeking that no one bothered to correct coz the rich are different?

*Fandom stream at Magic Casements III?* I wouldn't get your hopes up, the Sydney Literary/Arts Establishment is an inner city political scene and I suspect that The NSW Writer's Centre sees the current fannish level of MC3 to be about as far 'suburban' as they need to go. It is after all a society for 'Writers', not readers. Sorry missed that meeting due to election commitments.

### Ping! – John Newman

It used to be one of the delights of Sydney rail travel to see the exposed rock cuttings. Sydney is known to be a sandstone city, but road rail and building excavations reveal a more complicated geology. Not Happy John, eh John?

The Greens/Democrats supersession is much claimed but has very little basis in reality. There is a 'Go the Greens' response and an 'up yours' counter major party vote that wanders looking for a home at elections.

I see the Australian Democrats as a reaction to the Liberal party's abandonment of 'Liberal' policies. Thr

Greens occupy much the same relationship to the Labor Party, if you like a leftist DLP. There is still some environmental mileage to be sucked out of being a 'Green' party, but a thing to keep in mind is the difference between a Green Party and a mass environmental Movement made up of National causes and local pressure groups. For decades the Democrats were inviting Environmental groups to 'join the party' but they found good reasons not to politicise the environment. Brown et al (a former Democrat party staffer) got religion (politics) after seeing what the European Greens were doing and part of their success has been money from Europe.

The Democrat Party structure is a balance between the Senators, the state and territory branches and the ordinary members. The party of 'Trust Bob Brown' has yet to deal with an honest policy disagreement between it's Senators or when it's Senators feel a need to do a deal for the 'greater good' that a significant minority of party members/supporters decry. As for the GST – just ring Meg. How many of the Democrats up for election in 2004 actually voted for the GST? Answer me that before you blame the current Senate team! Do you still blame the ALP for the 1936 Income Tax reform where State income taxation was transferred to the Federal government?

### Way South – Michael O'Brien

I empathise with your feelings a year after bereavement. The loss of my father still pops up in unexpected ways. One night recently I took the dog for a walk and with a tear in my eyes it occurred to me that I was wearing my father's jacket, and walking the dog he caused us to get 'to keep mum company ...' on the Saturday night closest to the anniversary of his death. Not something I had remotely planned.

Enterprise is a series that I watch with mixed feelings, mostly disappointment when in being a Star Trek (interpersonal Dramas) show it fails to be a Science Fiction show. It is set sufficiently ahead of 'Classic Trek' that they could have said – stuff the cannon, let's get some real SF writers to do us some stories set on a star ship and worry about how it fits in to the Star Trek Bible in the next batch of episodes.

### You really know you're Home When You Find a Wombat in Your Bed #93 – Cath Ortlieb

Out of Curiosity, do any of your students watch Dr Who or Silver Sun (both ABC 'Children's TV shows)? I would like to have some understanding of the borders of 'cool' and when 'Children's SF' crosses the line as 'uncool'.

**Odd News and Nonsense** – Roger Sims

There is a 'Skeptic's Annotated Bible, Quran and Book of Mormon' website that I have bookmarked. In effect an e concordance. It allows you to search for all the rude bits etc. without having to apply serious scholarship. See my Karenzapa comments about Hurricanes etc. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

**Ytterbium 73** – Allan Stewart

Pocket sized Fuel cells indeed. Insulated liquid or compressed Hydrogen gas filled fuel cells may need to be bulky but I have read of Australian developed combat support equipment fuel cells as a weight effective alternative to lugging a diesel generator into natural disaster of combat situations. Again I do rather wish our Sydney Bus /Train operators would do you're your Tram authority does with tickets – A Sydney Worldcon publicised to a Million daily commuters – sorry just dreaming. See editorial for details of TBS&E 6's printing mishap. Quite a respectable effort in the reading list, especially all the local SF&F publications read. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

**Interstellar Ramjet Scoop** – Bill Wright

I am unable to find any Astronomical quibble with the cover of this issue. I'm not entirely enthused by the fuss over SpaceShipOne winning the Ansari X prize. It fulfilled the specifics of the prize contract but I do not see it as a 'First True commercial Star ship'. In the past there have been better claimants to 'affordable access to space' who have tried and died in the attempt for want of final stage funding. See editorial for details of TBS&E 6's printing mishap. Gosh was that a poke at a Sydney Vs Melbourne fan feud thing via Eta Carina? If you like I can give her your contact details and say you were interested in re-publishing her book!

**Les Chattes Parties 73** – Sally Yeoland

On the providence of Flying carpets – I have a suspicion that the Islamic world inherited this concept from the preceding (Persian) Zoroastrian culture, vaguely recall reading that the thing about magic carpets was that each knot represented a prayer or spell and there would be thousands of these in each carpet. The theological reason Why Moslems traditionally prefer to pray on a carpet (rather than bare ground), often a family heirloom might explain much. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

**Kingdom of the Bland** – Eric Lindsay

Dear Eric on the non-work front at work things are working out far better than I had hoped. Bankstown

has opportunities I have yet to explore due to the election and all that.

The more you stop to look the more unusual things you begin to notice, whether your point of attention is Astronomy, People or Politics etc. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

**Karenzapa 14** – Karen Johnson

Florida does seem to have been in the wars of late with those Hurricanes, but I'm not sure how much of this is a weather problem and how much is an architecture issue, i.e. is there too much cleared forest/open space that lets these winds hit at ground level, are the building codes rigorous enough to prevent flimsy construction, and lastly, does Florida actually get more and worse Hurricanes than say the sugar cane coast of North Queensland? Irrespective of this I hope you and yours are settled in and safe.

*Book Crossings* is an idea I like. I can see it as a natural recruitment vector for the sorts of SF readers that could be 'turned' into SF fans. I have even considered adopting it as the 'fan charity' of future Sydney Freecons. The only thing that holds me back is the cost of bookplates and registration, for small numbers of books, towards \$1.00 US or nearly \$A2 per book. Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

**GUFF 2004-05 Ballot: Aust' Asia to Europe** – Jean Weber

I have a generally positive reaction to the idea behind Fan Funds. Our Brother in Christ, Sydney fan John August has said (or is reported to have said which is much the same thing for fannish purposes) that Fan Funds are too often about friends being subsidised to go abroad and meet their fannish friends. I would not go that far, as I am aware of how much some Fan Fund winners have contributed to recent Australian SF conventions, but from now on before I vote in these things I will be asking for evidence of evangelical credentials i.e. what does the candidate propose to do for the Fandom in places that currently lack annual conventions or other signs of active fan life, bringing the faith to the unconverted masses? Most Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Hobart fans mostly meet Fan Fund winners when they travel interstate to other cities SF conventions. Dunno if it will change things, but I might as well ask the question on behalf of all of Sydney's 'missing fans', the 100,000 SF&F readers who aren't SF fans yet and wouldn't think of going to SF cons - Yet.

**From the Lair of the Lynx #27** – LynC

*The joy of re-structuring!* Not going far enough I say, lets abolish families, contract out and outsource your

parental responsibilities to ASA 9000 suppliers who are free to subcontract out to Non-award, Enterprises bargaining subcontractors. Set up benchmarked standards for Filial and Matrimonial affection, outsource 'conjugal rights' and just watch the 'Administrative Savings' roll it – Bull Dust. I do wish that someone some time was held responsible for the loss of skills and corporate memory that inevitably occurs whenever one of these restructures is caused. The absence of real 'Administrative Savings' or permanent advantage from continuous restructuring has been known since the times of the Roman Scipio Africanus.

*The Grey water Peril* – Indeed there is a statutory fear of grey water. The powers that be have to assume that everybody in your household takes turns hosting Hepatitis, Typhus, and Cholera etc. while you live between immune challenged neighbours with no concept of hygiene. To be even handed, there are also rain tank perils as well, Traffic dust of all sorts of toxic qualities, Mosquito breeding, plant matter and bird by product that can make an unsupervised water tank go 'off'.

The real world however is a lot more able to cope than in the administrative alternate universe. I.e. by all means SPRAY your fruit trees with soapy bath water and greasy kitchen water, insecticide resistant pests just hate having to chew through that gunge to get to leaves fruit and sap. SUNLIGHT will sterilise most nasties, soil bugs will eat food scraps etc.

If you are short of funds (but have transport) consider barrels, Steel or Plastic, you can add storage as you can afford it, fill and cap barrels as rain becomes available (no mosquito or evaporation problem) With several open at any one time, you can selectively store water of varying qualities (Grey, Muddy Rain Storm water from street gutters or 'blue' clear rain water) instead of all water ending up in a single large tank with overall quality determined by the lowest quality water since the last filling.

Ultracrepidarian Bounder! 5 – Kim Huett

From the comfort of a 'permanent' (but liable to be restructured at two year intervals) I have a great deal of sympathy for your situation, trying to mix & match sufficient part time employments to sustain a lifestyle of you choosing.

The Accident – The irrationality of being 'in shock' and it's after effects are not appreciated until well after you are over it. When I lost 66-80% of my blood supply at a con in 1988 I had no thought as to how close I had come to death, but I then spent the best part of an academic

year telling everyone. In 1982 when my mother was hit by a truck (Drunken, suspended driver) and had her pelvis and one leg shattered. Her concern for a week after the accident was the state of her underwear after the accident.

I have also known people whose properties just missed being wiped out by a bush fire front (grass burnt to half a metre of their pig shed). They could talk of nothing else for months, as they needed the 'validation' of strangers to process the emotional impact of the event.

*Entropy Reprint* – SBS TV has been running a weekly 'Buggers' program about insect pests, some coverage in Sydney papers about bed bugs appearing in some backpacker to resort accommodation. Apart from this I know of no one with local bed bug experience. I presume that much of this was prevented by quarantine laws or cleared out by public health policy after the 1900 – 1901 Plague years or just that Sydney's world champion status in daily humidity fluctuation has made infestation difficult to catch on. Cockroaches yes, some Balmain ones are reported to be twin engine jobs, but bed bugs no, until the US Free Trade pact takes effect? Read the rest of your contribution with interest.

OBO 221 – Bruce Gillespie

Oh dear how did I get so close to hitting Minac, only three months to February. My hopes of getting issues out more regularly bloom eternal, but so much arises from time to time to put paid to my expectations. Read your contribution with interest, but I have nothing to offer towards 'Ancient ANZAPANS', other than to comment that in the 1980s I worked (Dept of Defence Support, NSC Zetland) at the same place as Vera Lonergan who was at that time an ANZAPA member I believe.

## Do You Remember the Days in the old School Yard?

Some notes after attending the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Clemton Park Public School (CPPS), 7 September 2004

When I read in the local paper and was emailed at work by a current CPPS parent that this year's Education week would feature an 'Old Clemtonians' open day. I decided to take a day off work (and the election campaign) to attend. I'm glad I did. I was one of the few 'Old Clemtonians' present that day who were able to bring my mum.

On the day I felt that a great opportunity was being missed, I feel that none of the old Clemtonians should have been allowed to leave without writing down a 'school days memory' or two, so I decided to jot down this account of what I remember of 1966 to 1972 and what on the day I overheard some other old Clemtonians talking about.

In 1966 my family moved from 124 Bexley Road where we were living with my Grandmother, to 1 Eulabah Avenue, a few hundred metres up the road (two bus stops). A major reason for this move was to be closer to CPPS the local school whose main building is a local landmark.

I attended from 1966 to 1972, but our family association is longer, my older brother having started school there two years earlier. During much of this time, my mother also attended this school, helping out as voluntary worker in the school canteen. She found it a very good way of meeting the parents of other kids at CPPS and she formed many still existing life long friendships with other mothers on the canteen roster.

Even after leaving CPPS for High School (Kingsgrove North) I have been able to maintain a familiarity with the school, keeping an eye out for vandalism while passing through on nocturnal dog walks, and occasionally using the school grounds as a site for sky watching (mostly Lunar eclipses, Satellites and bright comets) with my telescopes, but most importantly – by handing out 'How to Votes' for the Australian Democrats on successive Federal, State and Local Government election days.

Standing at the School gate on an election-day is a very good way to meet old friends/neighbours and watch the changing face of the community.

I entered the school just after 9.00 am and was met at the gate by a swarm of bright and well presented 'guides' who conducted me to the old block's entrance where I was name tagged and given a CPPS open day program and map.

Before taking one of the organised tours I wandered around a bit, trying to place the classrooms that I had spent time in. This was made difficult by the re-organisation of the school after the fire, two of my class rooms had been burnt up! I then had a look at the library, many fewer books than what I remember as an assistant Librarian, then went home to collect my mother and walked with her to the school, passing our next door neighbours on the way.

## Notes and Memories

- There were hundreds of old Clemtonians turning up as the morning progressed, most were from the pre-1960 classes, many from the pre WW2 classes.
- The program said that there were other 'parent' days during the week of events.
- Eulabah Avenue and other nearby streets filled up with cars, just like on an election day!
- A class photo from 1929 was produced, it turned out that there were two old girls from that photo present.
- One 84 year old Old-boy (from the first year of CPPS!) explained that in his day the school was surrounded by three dairies (to Milk Cows!) and that all the boys and most of the girls would come to school with a pocket knife to sharpen their pencils and Ink pens
- The original school Canteen was across Bexley road. In my time there was a Fish and Chip shop across the road on the Eulabah Avenue corner. During school hours this shop was out of bounds to us children, being across a busy road, but teachers were frequently seen sneaking across the road for their lunch-time hot chips. This shop was considered by many of us to be a marked improvement to the shop that was there before it; Mr Posiglou's Barber shop, where the speciality of the house seemed to be short back and sides or crew cuts.
- There used to be (in the 1930s or 40s?) room for a full sized football field on the school grounds (like at Beaumont Park) from Miller Street to Bexley road, before the wooden buildings were built.
- During WW2 there were air raid shelters and trenches (to hide from the Japanese) in the ground near where the before and after day care buildings are now.
- During the 1960s the Concrete topped brick box (with the tree growing beside it) close to the fence on the Bexley road side of the school was almost completely covered by the drooping branches of one of the palm trees. It was known by us kids to be 'Captain Cook's Grave' – although no one could explain how we knew this.
- In the 1960s we had four and five classes in each year, towards 900 children, currently they have about 500.
- Many remarked how well resourced the school looked compared to their memories, Carpets, Bright colours, Computers and smaller class sizes, better than many private schools I have seen.
- In the infants classes (adorable little munchkins all, I can understand why their parents are so attached to them) they already have computers to use, carpet and tiny little chairs to sit on clustered into study groups.
- I noticed that a 'Music Mobile' was parked in the school grounds, a mini bus capable of giving a music lesson to half a dozen children at a time.

- The school has several special units and facilities attached, a Dental Clinic, Reading recovery unit and space for Saturday school activities, cultural and languages.
- The Principal gave a speech in the school's hall where my brother and I watched the Moon Landings as they happened and sometimes films on Friday afternoons, His speech was about many things. I recall the following;
  - How the reputation of CCPS wanders through the community in unexpected places, spread by 'Old Clemtonians' and parents.
  - Some of the 'Old Clemtonians' present at today's events had travelled from as far as Queensland and distant parts of NSW.
  - Many of the children at CPPS now have Greek parents. Greek, English and Chinese languages are taught at school. Beyond the three Rs children at CCPS nowadays learn about Media Studies – Sex Education – Aboriginal studies – Drug Education – Music – Languages – ESL – Computers and IT.
  - The School choir sang two very sweet songs even though most of their members were away at a sports carnival.

#### **I recall that:**

- In 1971/72 they bulldozed the top off the hill at the Miller street end of the school and using rocks and dirt built a big level grassed playground that you see today. It took a long time for the grass to grow. One afternoon we had a 'Sahara' sandstorm and had to walk backwards into the wind to pick up papers. On other days after rain, the water would cut great a long sandy creek through the playground.
- **School Milk** – To help out the farmers (we were told), free School milk used to be delivered to the school in one third pint glass bottles (200 ml) early in the morning to be drunk at school assembly. In summer this sometimes meant the milk had been left in the sun for some hours Leftovers were available for 'seconds' and if some were still left over, some times they were still available at lunchtime. One day I was able to drink seven bottles, three in the morning and four at lunch, which I believe was a school record!
- Another vivid memory I have of CPPS was in sixth class. By year 5 and 6 most of the girls in the class were bigger and stronger than the boys, so us boys used to live in fear and learned to get out of their way. From school assembly the route for Mr 'Harry' Highland's class was down the playground to the out door (North) stairs, then up the stairwell then all the way along the top floor corridor past the Library. As the class filled the stairwell, the teacher could not see what was happening

in the middle of the stairwell. Some of the girls, two or three of them would gang up on another girl and with one on each side, grab her, hold her arms, re-arrange her uniform then run up the stairs to mix with the 'innocents' walking behind 'Harry'. The re-arranged girl would arrive late for class or in a disorderly state outside the library and spend most of the day plotting how to get even with her friends.

- One year there was a peculiar and brief fad that had the boys washroom crowded at both recess and lunchtime. CPPS is built on the top of a shale/mudstone capped hill of Sydney Sandstone. It was started by one boy (David Morgan?) who had discovered that you could take a piece of mudstone (that stuck out of the ground near the cricket nets) and by rubbing it against the wet concrete under running taps you could easily shape the stone into a square of rectangular 'tile'.

There was a great deal of competition among the boys for access to the best stones, taps or lengths of wet concrete and also to make the 'best' or the largest 'tile' out of the stone you had found. While the fad lasted, the floors and drains were awash with a milky coloured mud and clay as a dozen boys at a time were grinding their stones into large and small 'tiles', with more lined up outside the wash room waiting for a space to become available to work on their 'tile'. I do not remember what the 'tiles' were supposed to be used for, it was only briefly in fashion and it took only a week or so before the teachers stopped us making the 'tiles'. We must have wasted lots of water running the taps to keep the concrete wet.

Thinking over the situation in the library I was momentarily overcome with a sense of 'Old Clemtonian' school spirit, so I went home and brought back a number of new Space, Astronomy and Dinosaur books as gifts to the school library. I presented them to the Principal who seemed to appreciate the thought behind the gift. I'm looking forward to attending the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, hope to see you there and hear your stories. GPD © September 2004

**By Request, Rain Man, the Son of the Son of a water bailiff speaks again!**

***Heroic Victory on the Waterfront!***

***Busting the Drought at the Dalrymple's place***

On the household water front, things have stabilised. Bath and rinse cycle water from the Washing machine suffices for the toilets and frequent excess is dumped on front and back lawns. Desirable garden plants are individually watered with a litre or so water scooped out of the grey water bucket. The use of Rain water is mostly a daily one or to 10 litre buckets which are used as part of the pre-wash, to soak or rinse clothes before they go into the washing machine. During the colder nights of winter, before I turn in, I have been bringing two litres of rain water to the boil and partly filling a three litre plastic milk bottle. This hot water bottle is stood in a corner of Mystique's cage, to warm the air in the cage while she sleeps (during winter she also has a knitted wool 'jumper' to sleep in). Mother says that it is frequently still warm to the touch, six hours after I have put it in. If you like you can do the mathematics, 2,000 ccs of water, 80 degrees of C and six hours duration, not quite a single bar heater, but I think it keeps her a little more comfortable at night.

I have boosted potential rainwater storage to a maximum of about 400 Litres by buying a few more 45 Litre buckets, and by the discovery that McDonalds outlets get their disgusting green pickle slices delivered in sturdy but discard able 15 litre buckets (I have seen stacks of these empty and shoved into each other standing 2 metres high). Since Conflux, in the midst of Sydney's continuing drought there were nearly 40 days without 'bankable' rain. I had less than 40 Litres left before a day or two of rain, five to ten mm, filled everything up again. Plans to 'get a tank' are on hold. Several Plastic 205 Litre drums still the preferred option for cost effective and space reasons. With the new job at Bankstown comes a new perspective, i.e. each morning my bus to Campsie Station passes a Plumber's Shop. On the lawn of the house behind it are three PVC rain tanks, subliminal reminders?

**Hail on the night of September 5**, on Sunday there were two hail storms in Sydney. In Earlwood the first took place in the early afternoon (pictures on TV?) and resulted in orange seed sized hail. From 6 to 8 the sky was criss-crossed by impressive electrical storms. Later, from 8 to 9 pm down came more hail two to three cm diameter although from the occasional 'BONG's of ice hitting downpipes and guttering, some must have been much larger. An effect of this noise was that Mystique was uncharacteristically 'companionable' choosing to spend much of the storm with mother and me in the TV room. The front and back lawn were covered with ice chunks, but not enough for 'snow fights' or building 'snowmen'. The morning after I checked the rain buckets and found – MUD – have suspected this in

the past, but the melt / rainfall associated with this hail storm (source – inland?) was very dirty (Hail nucleating particles), the water was still grey coloured 12 hours after falling and left a layer of mud 2 to 4 mm thick at the bottom of buckets. This muddy water, ~150 litres worth is headed for the toilet buckets, although I have considered collecting the mud by collecting it on filter paper and drying it out for analysis. I.e. is the mud city diesel soot, coal fly ash, volcanic ash or wind blown 'black soil plains' dust?

**Garry's Rain record** - June to November *(to date)* 2004  
(NB my results are consistently only 55-65% of those quoted by the Earlwood FreeWX internet weather station and may vary from the official Sydney (Observatory hill) rainfall figures. Part of this error is almost certainly consistently systematic)

**June 04 – 4.24 mm**

02/03 – 0.97mm

10/11 – 3.27 mm

**July 04 - 14.16 mm**

9/10 – 6.19 mm

10/11 – 2.65 mm

11/12 – 1.55 mm

12/13 – 0.01 mm

19/20 – 2.12 mm

24/25 – 1.33 mm

26/27 – 0.31 mm

**August 04 - 42.55 mm**

02/03 – 0.18 mm

14/15 – 0.265 mm

16/17 - 1.63 mm

17/18 – 26.59 mm

18/19 – 12.56 mm

29/30 – 1.33 mm

**September 04 – 26.48 mm**

01/02 – 3.01 mm

04/05 – 1.86 mm

05/06 – 9.94 mm

07/08 – 3.67 mm

19/20 – 2.43 mm

29/30 – 5.57 mm

**October 04 – 95.25 mm**

30/01 – 8.94 mm

01/02 – 18.81 mm

17/18 – 16.81 mm

18/19 – 11.32 mm

19/20 – 1.77 mm

20/21 – 27.87 mm

21/22 – 3.10 mm

24/25 – 6.63 mm

**November 04 –**

01/02 – 1.55 mm



02/03 – 0.22 mm  
 07/08 – 0.71 mm  
 09/10 – 2.61 mm  
 10/11 – 0.00 mm

## Heroic Victory on the Waterfront!

### **Busting the Drought at the Dalrymple’s place**

With this quarter’s water bill came news of an astonishing achievement on the waterfront, a drought breaking effort so to speak. The highlights of our most recent water bill are;

Average Daily water use, period 1 Jul 04 to 30 Sept 04

Nil

And it gets better!

#### **Water Meter readings from Sydney Water bills**

Date of reading	Meter	days	Total used this quarter	daily
20/5/03	127 KL			
11/8/03	159 KL	83	32,000 L	386 L
17/11/03	192 KL	98	37,000 L	378 L
19/2/04	207 KL	94	15,000 L	160 L
18/5/04	245 KL*	*(84)	(38,000 L)	452 L
25/8/04	225 KL	97	<i>Minus 20</i>	<i>-206L !</i>

That is to say that during this period mum and I used a total of **minus twenty cubic metres of water!**

**Beat that!**

Mum phoned the water people to check this out. It seems our May 18 reading was read incorrectly, overstating our actual water usage, possibly occurring because the meter reader presumed we must have used much more water than we did. As luck would have it, I read and recorded the water meter reading on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and it was close to 225.

**Corrected bill** (by my extrapolation from 178 days between the correct February and August readings)

19/2/04	207 KL	94	15 KL	160 L
18/5/04	276 KL	84	8.5 KL	101 L
25/8/04	225 KL	97	9.8 KL	101L

I.e. as of August 25 Uncle Frank Sartor in fact owes us \$20! Or if you prefer in May we ‘prepaid’ for **287 days of metered water use.** Just for the joy of collecting

four consecutive ‘nil usage’ water bills I am sorely tempted to go to financially irrational extremes of water conservation to try and stretch that to a full year. I.e. by getting rain water into 205 litre drums and then into the washing machine, the 287 days (at 101 L per day) could easily be stretched to over 400 days.

**At the moment Mum and I are using each week;**

**Showers, 2 times 7 times 20 L = 280 litres**

**Washing machine, 3 times 70 L = 210 litres**

**Kitchen & Bathroom Sinks, 60 L per week**

For a Weekly total about 550 Litres. Just over half a kilo litre of metered water use per week. **NB** If you want to look at it one way, Grey water collected from the Shower and washing machine provide enough for seven full (10 litre bucket) toilet flushes per day every day of the week.

Incidentally, our household water meter (as read by me at 8 am August 23) was **02253178**. The number in bold refer to kilolitres. I find this ‘accuracy’ to be surprising as the final figure recorded on a household water meter is actually reading single tenths of litres used, i.e. about half a cup of tea. At Sydney water rates this unit of water is worth about \$0.00001. Such penny shaving!

### **Garry’s Handy hint for plug less water saving**

When running a shower it usually takes time for the water to reach a comfortable temperature. Consider holding a 10 litre plastic bucket up under the shower rose while you are waiting for the temperature to become ‘just right’. Then use this bucket of clean water to give your clothes a pre-wash soak.

*There, no ‘ick’ factor at all.*

Good plastic buckets with handles and lids (10 and 20 litre), much more durable than the ones for sale at supermarkets may be available for the asking at your local fast food or donut shop. These buckets are used to deliver all manner of bulk quantities of foods and condiments (donut toppings, Mayo & Pickle slices).

### **Water Postscript – Current Water Meter Reading**

231.87365 k L as of Thursday 11 November 2004

Estimated Average daily usage since 25/8/04 - **89.3 L** (45L per person) Or it will be about 147more days, until 06 April 2005 when we will need to pay for water again!

## **Blue Pages – Science and Astronomy**

## BAANSW / Sydney City Skywatchers

Astronomically speaking the months of September to November were a complete loss. The minutia of contesting a Federal election left me unable to attend committee or public meetings in September and October. For the first time in recent memory, I missed attending the AGM. The only highlight being my re-appointment to the committee.

However, recent financial developments have increased my resolve to buy some new Astronomical equipment and to re-commence more active observation.

I am looking forward to November as there will be astronomical moments, with the Australian Skeptics convention, a SCS public meeting and some worthwhile TAMS events to cover.

I ended up spending the whole of the much publicised November SCS meeting stuck in a train between stations on Sydney's underground due to 'signal failures' at Ashfield.

## Green Pages – Politics

### Garry's notes and impressions on the events of Saturday October 09, 2004, Australian Federal Election day

Ah the joyful Tosevite process of 'Snout Counting', so dismissingly referred to by the lizard race colonisers in Harry Turtledove's Alternate History adventure 'World War' series of books. Last time we did one of these in 2001 it took place on the same day as the first North Sydney public Library Freecon. This time I returned from political retirement to stand again for my local seat of Watson in order to boost the NSW vote for the Australian Democrat Senator Aden Ridgeway.

#### Those Preference Deals

Before anything else let's get one thing straight, the Democrats did not 'give' their preferences to Family First. No political party does. What is done is a negotiated exchange of preferences i.e. we will put you ahead of X if you put us ahead of Y based on abstract mathematical calculations of what you think your / their party will get. If your primary vote/quota situation permits they fold before you and you benefit, or vice versa. If you do not get enough primary votes to matter, they flow on until they meet a senate candidate that can be elected. The AD campaign team was very sensitised to this issue going into the election as in the 2001 election Kerry Nettle was elected with a primary

vote some thousands less than that of the unsuccessful Democrat candidate. You didn't hear the greens whinging then! After the Greens and Labor did a deal there were fewer uncommitted parties for the Democrats to deal with, a percent or two more or less and there could have been a mixed bag of Greens, Democrats and Family First Senators elected to the final seat of most states. The Killer was most likely the Labor/Greens tight exchange that ensured that a third Labor Senator would be a 'near miss' in most states rather than flowing to elect a minor party Senator deal ahead of a third Liberal or second National party Senator.

#### The Watson Experience

The NSW Federal seat of Watson is named after a Paraguayan born early Australian parliamentarian. Geographically it is a kicked around Triangle with a longest side being King George's Road (a major North South roadway) the other sides of the electorate come to a point where the Cooks River and the Wollie Creek merge. It is between the Marrickville, Burwood, Bankstown and Hurstville, which means it is in part an 'inner city', 'suburban' or 'South West' suburb. It has low rent blocks of flats at the Campsie / Cooks River margin, High rise apartment blocks at the Hurstville end and mostly single story houses in between. It has two major built environment issues – Aircraft noise from the nearby Sydney Airport and the unfiltered / untreated emissions from the 9 Km long M5 Expressway tunnel. The Ethnicity of Watson is very mixed, the Hurstville end of the (Hong Kong?) Asian population is highly visible and presumed to be affluent; the flats of Campsie attract most recent arrivals, so the 'face' of Campsie strongly reflects our most recent migrant/refugee intake. Greek Australians seem to be moving in from their parent's area of Marrickville. The electorate has several Mosques serving several local Islamic communities based on sect or previous national origin.

#### Who stood for the seat of Watson?

1. **Tony Burke – Australian Labor Party (ALP)** gave up a long term seat in NSW's upper house for the 'risk' of running for a Federal seat. There wasn't much risk in standing for this safe Labor seat. A minimum necessary public campaign (local issue Canterbury Hospital – see the Hospital voting place numbers) but attending to your factional powerbase and retaining pre-selection to stand is more important if you plan to seek a career in Labor party politics.
2. **Cat Cannone – Family First (FF)** A political group largely assembled out of the membership of the 'Church of Christ' Evangelical Christian movement. The

achieved lasting political infamy by 'denying Christ' before the electoral cock crowed. Apart from that, this party was given a dream run through the campaign

3. **John Coleman – Pauline Hanson's One Nation (ON)** – A candidate whose local newspaper picture shows an 80 year old codger with bad indigestion, and no teeth or hair to speak of. This NSW One Nation Party no longer has any legal connection to Pauline Hanson (who stood as an independent in Queensland after being released from jailed for fraud). As far as I know he did no campaigning or letterboxing during the campaign and I saw no one giving out ON how to votes on election-day. He still beat me, is there no justice!

4. **Garry Dalrymple – Australian Democrats (AD)** Dynamic, Charismatic and Popular were just some of the words not used to describe my recent campaign and candidature. I stood with the expectation that having a local candidate would increase the AD Senate vote in the hope that this might prove to be enough to return Senator Aden Ridgeway. 'My' election-day campaign workers consisted of Me, Mum, Stephen Bingle (a friend from Victoria) a pair of Labor party members (to re-elect Aden...), general AD representation at Sydney Town Hall (an all NSW seats polling station) and a mystery person who took a bag of HTVs off my porch and hopefully gave them out some where.

5. **Kali Reid – The Greens** – A resident of inner city Glebe of University age and some local connections. She did rather poorly all things considered. Watson has a two generation long history of environmental activist groups which the local Greens promoters have been able to feed on and Watson is immediately adjacent to Marrickville where the Greens came very close to controlling the local council in the March 2004 local elections. I heard during the campaign that a much better favoured candidate pulled out at the last minute due to a 'relationship failure'. Had herds of youngish Greens supporters to hand out stuff, as many as Labor!

6. **Ron Poulson – Independent** – believed to be a member of the '**Socialist Alliance**'. He owns a Campsie Post Office Box and probably stood for much the same reason as I did, to improve his party's NSW Senate vote, but puzzlingly he chose not to disclose this party affiliation on the ballot paper. I believe he has stood in previous elections.

7. **Kieth Topolski – Liberal** – The traditional Liberal party parachute candidate. They have been doing this since when Alan Jones stood for Earlwood, posing in

Greek national costume and recording a swing against while all other Liberal candidates enjoyed a 'Griener landslide'. This candidate was 20 year old, still at uni, claimed to be working part time at a flower shop / as a company director, resident of Baulkham Hills. No known local connection to the area, probably drafted in at the very last minute from a University Liberal club coz no local Liberal party member could be bothered to stand. He got his 'Howard Mandate' swing of a couple of percent in spite of not his party being unable to field enough campaign workers to staff all Watson voting places. In fact they had to rely on Carlo Favorito (Independent Canterbury Alderman and Real Estate Agent) to recruit his grandchildren and some non-Labor supporters to staff the Clemton Park Public School booth, the largest voting place in the seat of Watson. Carlo said that he would not be taking on this responsibility in future elections.

Not standing in Watson but creditably represented were the **Christian Democrats** who used a 'live bait' strategy to appeal to voters in having several presentable young women on hand (from a Christian College?) to give out **Fred Nile's** Senate HTV. A level of candidate support equalling that of The Greens. Some of the Labor 'boys' got a bit too excited and were offensively mouthy on meeting live 'non-factional' young women.

#### How I spent the Day

Up at 7 am and out at 7.30 to check to see if the Australian Democrat placards I had put out last night had been defaced or covered up. Only one had been covered up by the Greens. I started handing out HTVs at the Bexley Road gate from about 8.20 am. There was an extremely large early rush to vote, at 8 am there were long line of voters lined up outside the building, standing in the sun for thirty minutes to get to the door of the voting building and then lines inside the building that made voting a 20 minute experience. This took til about 10.30 to clear when it was a 'walk through' voting experience, no more than five minutes. At about 9 am Mother arrived to help out and claimed the Bexley Road gate (coz it was closer to home) so I was banished to the less frequently used Miller St. back of the school gate. Mother spent most of the day talking to 'Doris the mad cat woman' a former one term Independent Alderman who has a great deal of community influence through leading the local Red Cross organization. I took a couple of half hour breaks during the day and voted during the afternoon, but mostly I spent the day standing up handing out HTVs until nearly 5.45 pm.

Standing all day in the one spot and watching the day go past is not something I do every week. When handing out HTVs you engage in small talk with the other candidate's helpers, usually discussing the behaviour of voters after they have passed through. Another theme of the day was 'Where are the Liberals', as they were conspicuously thin on the ground, sometimes leaving the back gate unattended!

At the back of the school there is a large grassed playground so as the day progressed I was able to watch the succession of birdlife from mid morning to late afternoon. The playground is fringed by various flowering gum trees and is the largest flat-ish piece of grass for some distance, so it attracts both grassland and forest dwelling birds. During the day I noticed Swallows, Native and Indian Mynas, Lorikeets, Magpies, Quarions (a crested dove like bird) and Willy Willies. Passing through unseen were probably Wattle Birds, Crows, Ibises and Sulphur crested Cockatoos.

A pleasant enough day on the day, but the day after! Standing in the breeze and the emotional upset of the results sent my back into a week long tailspin of pain.

### Results Tables Explained - Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3

**Table 1.1** shows that the result can vary dramatically across the forms of voting available. If you want to you can make some assumptions about the 'class' and motivation of different types of voters.

**Ordinary** – Have the Saturday Free of work or social commitments and so able to vote in their home electorate.

**Absent** – Work, Holiday or other activity keeps them out of their registered electorate 8 am to 6 pm on voting day.

**Provisional** – recently enrolled, recent address change or just not bothered to register until very recently. Note the ALP and Green vote, much fewer for Liberals. A very high informal vote, begs the question of whether spoiled ballots were due to inexperience or antagonism to the procedure?

**Pre-poll** – Very committed to vote, had to plan to attend the AEC's single electorate office during business hours well ahead of voting day, in anticipation of not being able to otherwise vote on polling day. Note the very high smaller parties vote

**Postal** – The form of voting resorted to by the infirmed, the elderly and the overseas traveller. Note the Low Labor Green and Informal votes, high Liberal and One Nation votes.

### Tables 1.2 and 1.3

Comparisons of the voting for Watson, House of Representatives Vs the Senate voting record for Watson and NSW generally. This shows how comparatively 'safe' a Labour seat Watson is. Note that the Senate informal votes are very much lower than for the Watson house of reps. Suggesting that a sense of their vote 'counting' towards which six Senators are elected seems to insulate against informal voting NB the NSW Senate ballot paper was much more complicated (78 boxes) than the house of reps ballot (7 boxes).

- Some part of informal voting might be an expression of an 'up yours' response to being made to choose between ineffectual choices i.e. a Liberal supporter in a strong ALP seat and vice a versa.
- Should show the advantage to a Senate vote of having a local candidate stand
- Shows that the Greens register a much higher house of reps vote than Senate vote, (seen as an alternative at local government?) The Australian democrats on the other hand, have always received a higher Senate vote than average house of reps vote.

### Table 2 Voting differences within Watson

In many places my vote was the second least of the seven candidates, but at one I beat the Greens! The voting places where I received a higher vote were those where I had someone to give out How-To-Votes (HTV), the front and back covers of this issue. Note how the dominant party's (ALP) vote varies widely (76 to 46%) , giving some hope to non-Labor candidates in State and Local government elections if they choose their ground with care, and how the Informal votes also vary.

- **Family First** 'blips' of support above the average could easily be the result of single church congregations voting near their church!
- **The Greens** vote varies across the seat, from strong to irrelevant, from the Cooks River / Wollie Valley margin to the Ethnic / Retiree / High rise area voting places.
- The Liberals have some extremely low vote areas, possibly suburbs filled with new arrivals who might be taking personally the Howard government's anti refugee / asylum seeker and 'War against all swarthy people acting in a foreign manner'.

- 3.1 Illustrates the difficulty in standing effectively as a small party candidate. Watson is a fairly dense seat but to be represented at each voting place (some have multiple entrances) you need nearly 100 people on the day to help you. A big ask for a minor party candidate.

### Table 3, How did I go compared to other Democrats?

Of the 38 Democrat House of representative candidates my ranking was – number 18, middle of the field. Fair enough considering, but then I set to thinking, what more can be said? So I looked into things and made a discovery that cheered me up a bit and which I think is of national significance

**The Donkey vote** – A fondly held belief among minor party candidates is that if you get your name at the top of the ballot paper (see reproduction of the Watson Ballot paper on the HTV) then you are home and hosed, in that you will pick up a few percent more as some stupid ‘donkey voters’ with no sense of politics will just number the ballot 1-2-3-4 .... down the paper.

I noted the minor party candidates who stood against Democrat candidates in NSW, noted where they appeared on the ballot paper and then did the calculations. Not earth shattering, but some ‘real’ figures on the ‘Donkey vote’.

**The Reverse Donkey vote** - being an Australian Skeptic I had a look to see if the converse was also true. It seems to be! It seems that in some cases there is a ‘Reverse Donkey vote’. If you think about it, it makes some sense. Imagine if you are approaching the voting place with resentment. On receiving your ballot paper you could spoil it (no vote to be counted) by scrawling some apposite comment, you could donkey vote OR you could ‘make em work for it’ by starting at the bottom of the ballot paper and numbering upwards, leaving the voting place with a warm feeling of malicious achievement at making that poll worker have to work harder to count your vote and distribute preferences. I would note that this effect works best if your party and it’s policies are not well understood. I. e. people did not reverse donkey vote for the Greens or for the party of Fred Nile. A history making discovery? You decide.

Lastly, final Green Pages piece

### Whither The Democrats, What Happened?

We’re ALL Doomed Right? End of the linesville for the Australian Democrats?

No probably not. Yes the Democrat vote collapsed and we failed to get a single Senator elected, but we still have four Senators and ‘Four More Years’ (actually three and a half) to turn things around.

There are also WA, SA and NSW State Upper House (State Senate) parliamentarians who are elected by smaller and easier to obtain quotas than Federal Senate positions.

It will be a lot easier to convince the media that the Democrats are elect able to a 5% quota seat than it was to convince them that we could make it to a 17% quota. If the media were to accept this, then on the 2004 NSW Senate vote we would have got an additional NSW State Upper House parliamentarian at the last NSW election.

### Some other points about the 2004 Federal Election

- The predicted ‘Green Wave’ of 10 to 15% in all states failed to occur and the nationwide Green Senate vote has probably already peaked. Tasmania as usual being an island of exceptions, gave Bob Brown a partner.

- One of the other reasons for the Greens not being a replacement for the democrats beyond the Left / Centre thing is that the Greens polled better in the lower house seats than for the Senate, an inversion of the Democrats experience at all times.

- Just sticking to the script, Democrat Senators out there doing things could result in a surprising apparent leap in popularity. Next election the votes of those under two percent parties have to go some where (FF, CD and others) and I do not see them voting Green!

- As a home for ‘anti-government protest’ voters, Pauline Hansen ‘has left the building’ and most of the One Nation supporters have already returned to the Liberal fold.

- The movement that became the Australian Democrats goes back much longer than most people recall, there was an Australia Party first and then they were joined by people who could not conscience what the government of the day did with its control of the senate. It took years for Don Chipp to build a senate team and longer to achieve a Senate Balance of power. We still have four Senators, four years and guess what the modest and

retiring Liberals have control of the Senate and the house of reps – Deja Vu?

- In preferencing to drive the Democrats out of the Senate the Labor party has just acquired themselves a Left wing DLP, the Liberals must be laughing.

- I believe that as a party of the centre, a conscience of a Non-Labor government, there is still a role for the Australian Democrats to play in Australian Political life.

## Golden Pages – Science Fiction

### Cream of the Imagination

Just call me Ishmael. You wouldn't know me by my real name anyway, as I write so much these days under a couple of pseudonyms and I write a lot more than just Science Fiction and Fantasy.

I'm making a real effort to disguise who I am and where I am. That's why I'm turning up in this publication, amongst fans rather than in one of the big well known Science Fiction or Fantasy magazines. Partly this is for reasons of personal safety. Have you noticed how many big name SF writers are into SCA or Martial Arts?

Why such paranoia? Well it's because I'm going to let you in on THE big secret of Science Fiction writing, the one they don't dare tell you at Clarion, Clarion West or even that new Clarion South in Brisbane Australia, the one that some of you wannabe SF writers would kill to know.

Most people who have tried writing SF have suspected it, and a lot of people have come close to guessing it on their own, but it is a closely and zealously guarded secret among those in the know. The truth almost got out by accident during the 1985 World Science Fiction convention in Australia, Melbourne's Aussiecon II.

You know the scene, if you weren't there to see it you heard about it at SF conventions for years after. Someone dorky new fan at his very first SF convention raised his hand and asks the 'Great SF Writers' on the Guests of Honour panel the question. That question, the one that separates SF fens from just fans. The one question that could make the whole of the membership of the SF convention shudder and want to grab the twerp by his scrawny neck.

It was,

'... and Mr Silverberg, where do you get your ideas?'

And, surprisingly after a long lunch and a few too many full strength Aussie beers, they came close to telling him!

And do you remember how they sort of covered it up? It was the Aussiecon 2 Vegemite saga, the one where Robert Silverberg claimed that when he was stuck with a new book contract and a case of writers block, he would just get naked, slather on the Vegemite from head to toe, sleep between plastic sheets and by mid morning next day he would have a couple of chapters done and another Nebula award practically in the bag. All the writers on the panel said 'Yep we do too!'

Well I didn't know the secret. Not then, not till I could wallpaper Harlan Ellison's ego with rejection slips. I kept attending the cons, doing the courses and SF&F writers workshops and turning up to all the end of convention dead dog parties just hoping that that one day some small piece of advice would fall and I would be there to hear it and after that day it would all start to happen. I would become a real live published Science Fiction writer.

I never got that big break either. But just once I did get real lucky. I went to an out of town SF con and to save money, not being an invited Guest of Honour, I decided to share a room with this other fan who I met in the con hotel lobby.

You know how it goes. This was a real fan boy's fan boy. Since high school he had been to a hundred cons and a thousand room parties. He was a real dead set obsessive collector, and you know how these guys will collect and trade just about anything to do with a big name SF writer.

His big idea was to get into the rooms of con GOHS just after they had checked out, but before the cleaning staff moved in to clear up. He showed me his brag book, full of the photos of all the 'treasures' he had collected and traded for. This was stuff that doesn't even appear on ebay. With dates and places, all of it was stuff that had passed through the hands of a dozens of big name SF writers. Some it was claimed even still had 'Big Name Writer DNA' still attached!

Well you try humour these guys if you are sharing a room and a con. You try to make the right noises as you thumb through the album of their 'collection'. These guys are fen after all. One photo did stick in my mind for a long time though, it was something he said he had

collected from Isaac Asimov's room following one of his last Worldcon appearances, from before it was announced that he was real sick.

We spent a lot of that night drinking cheap red wine we had managed to smuggle past the fascist hotel night manager and talking mostly about Isaac, his books, his short stories, the magazine with his name and his illness. Like I say, he was a real fan boy but he was fen.

The photo wasn't much to look at. It showed a small squeezed out and discarded tube of some ointment or other. It was photographed front and back so you could see it had no identification other than an address on one side and a price sticker on the other side.

Long after the hangover had cleared in the morning I remembered that photo. It took more than a year for me to figure it out and again it was only by chance. I was going through a writing trade magazine looking for new Speculative Fiction magazines that I could send off my stories to, to collect more rejection slips. I was using the envelope from my last rejection slip as a book mark and I pushed it in, a few pages behind where I was reading. The phone rang. In answering it I dropped the magazine and it closed on the pages where I had been reading, losing my place.

After the phone call (it wasn't important) I went looking for the bookmark before I started to try and find when I had read up to. I found it up the back of the magazine, it was near a classified add at the back, a tiny cryptic little four line advertisement up the back in the classifieds section that I had seen from time to time in other writer's journals. It wasn't very clear what it was promising, possibly some treatment for writers cramp, back ache or even writers block, but the address and the price were familiar, exactly the same as in the fan boy's photo album!

It seemed expensive, but most months I had been spending more than that on overseas air mail just to collect rejections from overseas SF&F publications and I thought, what the heck, if it didn't work out I could always sell whatever it was to the fan boy!

I used to think that if you hung around enough successful writers someone would eventually take pity on you after countless 'almost good enough' rejection slips and let you in on the secret.

But, have you ever noticed how so many new SF and Academic writers really make it big only after they marry

some 'Big Name' writer or their son or daughter? Is there really such a thing as sexually transmitted publishability, or are we all just imagining it? How frequently after two SF&F writers split up does one ex-partner's writing just seem to get so much better, as if talent was part of the separation / alimony settlement?

When the stuff arrived it didn't look like much. It came in a plain cardboard box and there was a small much folded leaflet in a couple of dozen languages. It was just a small tube of white ointment that if it had been left behind in your bathroom by a house guest you wouldn't even bother to ring up and ask them what if it was important. At least in English, German and Klingon, it seemed to explain that to ease your Writers block you needed to apply the cream from the tube to your forehead, rubbing it in just above the creative lobes of your brain and then also you needed to rub it in on a part of your body that you feel is in some way connected with the sort of story you were planning to write.

It seems that this must be the stuff that L. Ron Hubbard used before he found Religion. It goes a long way to explaining how he could regularly churn out stories the afternoon before a deadline, weeks after the advance cheque had been cashed and spent.

It suggested rubbing it across the throat or vocal cords if you were writing about singers / singing or if you needed to do an album's worth of song Lyrics (across the ears if you need the music to accompany).

It suggested Double thick right over the frontal lobes for any SF / Speculative Fiction stories, and if you needed to grind out one of those thick formula Fantasy novels, it well thinner applications over several successive nights. Naturally, for Romance, just a dab across the heart!

I tried it, you rub it in, sleep on it and then in the mornings the stories just seem to flow for a few days. You shouldn't apply it every night, as it doesn't create imagination, it just acts to release the well spring of it imagination, so you need to give it a rest occasionally to allow for a recharge of the creative batteries so to speak.

When I spread some across my stomach after a good meal, I was hoping for some for food or cooking stories for a woman's magazine or possibly a dinner party interlude for some future story. The result was practically Gastro-porn. I take it you've all seen the TV series that came from that one?

Like with acupuncture you don't always hit the right spot with the cream first time. Sometimes you have to poke

around a bit and experiment with what seems to work for you. Have you noticed how many cross genre stories are getting publishing these days, in SF&F and mainstream publications?

Well, so why am I telling any of this to you?

Well you see the thing is that I have a real problem, a really difficult to solve problem, one that I can't see any solution to other than to put my hand up anonymously and asking fellow fans for advice.

The problem has it's origins in something that is partly embarrassing but many people will find just plain disgusting.

When the weather gets humid I always get tinea. Between the toes, and elsewhere. If you have ever had tinea real bad you will know exactly where it can grow. It tends to prefer the shade.

So here I was, booked to do this three week long book tour, parked in an agent booked hotel room for a couple more nights, so lonely and so needing a little loving (how your lifestyle changes when you are published!). As per bloody usual, the airline has lost my main luggage, so there I was, in a hotel room in a tropical city for three days with no change of clothes and only a bathroom sink to wash out each night what I was going to be wearing the next day.

So one night as I'm tossing and turning trying to get to sleep. I'm Groggy but unable nod off coz I'm hot, sticky, flaky and itching like hell in places I don't want to scratch. My mind keeps coming back to the plight of the long suffering popular genre writer. Half awake, I thought I remembered packing some vitamin A or Vitamin E cream, so I rooted around in my room until I found this tube in my day bag. It felt too small to be the toothpaste tube and it didn't smell like the back pain stuff so I squeezed some out and started to rub it on thick.

On thick, and in deep. I was prepared to try anything to just stop the itch and get a back to sleep for a few more hours until morning. I used up the whole tube relief came surprisingly soon. In only minutes I was deep asleep, and soon after dreaming.

It wasn't the Vitamin E cream.

And those weren't ordinary dreams. 'Wow', doesn't quite capture the moment.

When the dreams started I started to realize what sort of cream I had really used, but by then there was no stopping the tide of dreaming. In the light of morning I found the now empty but it only confirmed that I had emptied an entire tube of the Writers cream.

I cancelled that morning's store visit, begged off with some excuse and then I wrote and I wrote and I wrote. Cream or no cream, no experienced writer ever wastes a chance to get down material like this.

Over the rest of the tour, at nights, between appearances and on flights it kept coming and coming. As I added to the thick stack of notes it was the first time I have ever had to ask the hotel for more stationary to keep writing the story ideas down. I now have enough stories to fill a themed anthology (under several names, come on now you did know that most editors do that didn't you?) or perhaps a good start on a 'Sword and Ring' Trilogy.

But it's not the writing of it that's worrying me, it's the marketing.

I've sent off samples, some to 'Consensual' (too 'raw') and some and the 'Gaylaxians' and those 'Spaced out' chappies in Melbourne. They have refused point blank to reply to my hotmail account emails.

So what I'm asking, Fan to Fan is this, does anyone know how I can sell half a dozen of the hottest Hugo potential 'Back door' sex SF stories without getting my name in Locus?

I mean it's not that there's anything wrong with that, but most years I also shortlist for the major children's book prizes as well, and if it ever got out .....

So call me Ishmael1961, call me now

I'm on hotmail.

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Well what did you think about that, did you like it, did it make you itch?

Do you think I should I try to get this published some how or do you think I should I just have a little lie down until the strange feeling passes.

This story did sort of come to me in a dream during the morning of November 03, 2004.



## Books Read, July to November, 2004

- 27 June to 06 July, 'Nomansland'  
By D.G. Compton, 285 pages © 1993
- 14 to 16 July, 'Ephemeral Gods' by Felix Jenkins  
43 pages – a self published monograph
- 18 to 16 July, 'A Civil Campaign'  
By Louise McMaster Bujold, 405 pages, © 1999
- 23 to 30 July, 'A History of Warfare'  
By John Keegan 432 pages © 1993
- 30 July to 02 August 'Better than Sex'  
By Dr. Hunter S Thompson, 246 pages © 1994
- 02 to 08 August, 'Alternating Currents' an Anthology  
By Frederik Pohl, 190 pages © 1956
- 11 to 21 August, 'Mortal Remains'  
By Christopher Evans, 319 pages © 1995
- 21 to 31 August, 'The English Assassin'  
By Michael Moorcock, 267 pages © 1972
- 01 to 21 September, 'The Quality of Muzak'  
By Michael Moorcock, 305 pages ©1977
- 17 to 19 September, 'Enemies of the System'  
By Brian Aldiss, 124 pages © 1978
- 19 to 22 September, 'The Interpreter'  
By Brian Aldiss, 199 pages © 1960
- 22 to 25 September, 'Intimate Armageddon's',  
144 pages, 11 Stories, Edited by Bill Congreve © 1992
- 26 to 29 September, 'A Man Returned', 12 stories by  
Damien Broderick, 130 pages, © 1965
- 30 September to 13 October, 'Slant'  
By Greg Bear, 553 pages, © 1997
- 14 to 17 October, 'Assignment Gestapo',  
By Sven Hassel, 347 pages, © 1965
- 18 to 24 October, 'The Lighter Side' an Anthology of  
humorous SF stories by Keith Laumer and Edited by  
Eric Flint, 500 pages, © 2001
- 25 to 27 October, 'Cageworld No. 4 – Star Search'  
By Colin Knapp, 171 pages, © 1983
- 28 to 30 October, 'Starchild' by Frederik Pohl and  
Jack Williamson, 158 pages © 1965
- 03 November to the present, 'The Spike' by Damien  
Broderick, 280 pages © 1997

## Brief Book Reviews

**Nomansland** is a variation on the 'World without Men' story, male babies just stop being born and for a period of forty years the world starts to adjust to an all female paradigm. Technological society copes, patriarchal societies implode. It turns out to be that the cause of this 'man-famine' was the inadvertent escape of a virus created during research toward an AIDS vaccine. More than just a Science Procedural, as the researcher

looking for a cure has to contend with political intrigue (just like the FTA) and a brother who is a psychopathic killer! **Ephemeral Gods**, was written by a 'Sydney Past-urian', Sydney fan of the 1950s/60s. It was a bit of a hard read, as it attempted to bend Science, Philosophy and Theology to come up with a personal explanation of 'Why the World is like it is'. This sort of thing is a lot more easily absorbed over a beer or too after a con or on Friday afternoons after work. What I think Felix was saying is that people are in the state they are in because today with societal change / available technology, most of us are living everyday life with a self image that previous generations would as 'Ephemeral Gods'. I probably do not do his ideas justice in this short piece, but those were my impressions.

**A Civil Campaign** is not as clearly focussed as the previous Miles Vorkosigan novels. It might have been better as three or four Novellas as 1. Miles deals with in-law and butter bug trouble, secondly, Miles deals with pre-matrimonial difficulties and Counts' succession issues involving a sex changing heir and a Count whose legitimacy is called to question by pre-marriage genetic testing that detects an ancestor's infidelity and thirdly the impending marriage of Emperor Gregor. I fear that this is almost the end for Miles as a Galaxy scouring adventurer, 'too much romance' in this instalment.

**A History of Warfare** tries to break down into components all the aspects of Warfare as known to history. It is not a campaign by campaign sequential history, jumping from time and place to illustrate stages in the development of Warfare and where they have been repeated / duplicated as differing societies have gone through similar stages. The technology of Warfare, Spirituality of Warfare and philosophy of Warfare each get an adequate treatment. To detect any defects in the Author's approach I would need a Historian's degree, but no doubt there are other schools of thought current on a 'History' of Warfare. In **Better Than Sex** Hunter S. Thompson turns in his idiosyncratic account of the Presidential campaign that lead to the Clinton Presidency. Not at all complimentary to President Clinton or the US Presidential election system, but 11 years before Mike Moore, the incidental asides about President Bush (the First) are absolutely poisonous! I buy books like these as whether they are 'Right or Wrong' as opinion pieces they give a non-CNN/Sixty Minutes view of what goes on behind the façade. Even after discounting much of what is said as partisan, I still find this an important book to read ahead of the 2004 Presidential election. Weird and alarming, but possibly true. And no, it does not prove that Politics is better than Sex. **Alternating Currents**, is an anthology of about a dozen SF short stories by Fred Pohl, hailed on

the back cover as the 'Einstein of Science Fiction'. Some of these stories are quite dated but are still worth reading as 'state of the art' at the time and also for their current worth. **Alternating Currents** is a single author Anthology of stories, many of which are 'dated' due to the behaviour of major characters, but on the whole worth reading for the ideas in the stories. It makes me wonder if there could be a market for books of 're-made' SF stories, classic SFnal ideas of the 40s and 50s re-set in contemporary times?

**Mortal Remains** This book seems to have left me with no outstanding impressions other than the deliberate ambiguity of the title. I might look into this later, or not.

**The English Assassin** and **The Quality of Muzak** are both Jerry Cornelius novels, re-written by Michael Moorcock after their initial release. A set of stories set when it was still credible to believe that individual 'brilliant scientists', 'men of mystery' and 'shadowy sinister cabal's' could get away with influencing the state of the world. **Enemies of the System** - Imagine if the Soviet system had survived and then by an accident of history came to control the world for thousands of years? Human progress moves with glacial speed, party dogma and 'science' are interchangeable. Then strand a group of up and coming apparatchiks on the one world that was settled by humans (now 'sub-humans') without the benefit of the 'triumph of the party'. Survival reality collides with party 'truth', is it a test of orthodoxy or a true life or death situation?

**The Interpreter** (or **Bow down to Null A?**) By exploiting an unfair 'free-trade' agreement the alien Null's have taken control of Earth. These are large overbearing individuals who are confident that their culture super cedes all others and unwilling to learn the local languages or customs of the inhabitants of the many planets they have come to dominate. On Earth they rule through a caste of human interpreters. The chief interpreter learns that the Null have started to abandon control of worlds that were no longer 'cost effective' to rule and plunder, setting the stage for the 'collaborators' to turn into 'liberators'.

**Intimate Armageddon's** Several Spec Fiction/Horror stories by local writers collected into a thin book by Bill Congreve. Many stories were quite worth reading although 'Horror' is not my first choice of genre reading matter. Significantly I picked this up as a library discard, so what hope for longevity of public visibility for Australian SF&F and Speculative Fiction writers?

**A Man Returned**, Many of its stories were written at about the same time as the stories in **Alternating Currents**, but their ideas seemed to be still fresh. This edition had a missing/repeated middle section so I was unable to read all 12 stories. **Slant** Mental illness, a

self aware computer made of bugs, bacteria and fungi, set in an America extrapolated from present trends. An interesting story to read today but I cannot help wondering how anachronistic it will read in 20 or 40 years time. **Assignment Gestapo** When things are bad nothing cheers a fellow up better than to read of others having a worse time. This is a standard 'Life within the Reich' novel with bad things happening on the 'front' and equally bad things happening to 'internal enemies', frequently the innocent and the naive caught up in society where the ideology is a unquestionable and infallible. How will the war fiction set in the Bush years read a generation or two after the events?

**The Lighter Side** Was a mixed read, some read well, but many were unfunny or just went on for too long. I believe that this was the fifth volume of Laumer's works, so I guess it can be excused for not being a 'Best of .... Anthology' **Cageworld No. 4 - Star Search** As a rule I avoid 'part X of a Z part Trilogy' books, as I view it to be a failing in a writer if they are unable to finish a story in a single outing. However, as this was only a thin book I gave it a shot. It is set in an interesting place - Solaria, a future solar system where the planets beyond Earth are each replaced by Dyson spheres to allow Humanity's population to keep exponentially expanding for centuries. The spheres are illuminated by artificial suns (mostly) and there are diverse experimental planet sized Cageworlds set in the gateways between spheres. The story of this episode is to try to travel to beyond the last dyson sphere and to do what no human has done for generations, to look at the stars and to return to tell the tale.

**Starchild** Also has as it's universe a populated Solar System with a resident controlling computer that controls everything to out past Pluto, where among the 'reefs of Space' there are communities of free and an alien ecology. The point of view character is sent to investigate as a 'spare' computer was sent out there to spy on a threat to the computer's authority. It turns out that to keep itself challenged and fresh, the computer sent a duplicate out beyond Pluto to set itself up as a rival to it. This great plan is gazumped by the intelligent Stars (all matter is capable of storing information QED) greater universe that apparently had the same idea earlier, and in fact created life in the Solar System and mankind in particular to be a challenger to it!

**The Spike** looks into what might be expected to happen in the near future, when rates of change (progress) continue to a point where you cannot reasonably guess what might happen next - Information Technology and Nano Technology are subjects that I have read to date. I think the major point of this book is that the timing of the 'Spike' in any particular technology is itself hard to predict, that there may be a separate Spike event for

several technologies and how these will influence the other technologies is itself hard to foresee.

The rest of this page is provided for your notes toward Mailing Comment notes on Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment Volume 1 No. 8

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