

Transcendental Basenji Sermons & Enlightenment

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Postal Address:

P.O. Box 2 Bexley North NSW 2207
Home phone (after 7 pm) 02 9718- 5827
Garry.Dalrymple@det.nsw.edu.au

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Editorial

It is my hope that this issue will see me up to date, with both meeting reports and responses to other ANZAPAN contributions, allowing me to start the New Year with a clean slate.

2005 is looking to be a big year for Australian SF&F with significant events occurring almost each month. I'm not sure how I will be able to balance ANZAPAN and con going (and running?) obligations. On other fronts I hope to make some changes to non SFnal aspects of my life, including some 'mould breaking' efforts to achieve some personal goals that will let me get to Glasgow for the Worldcon as well as attending a few interstate cons without as much anxiety as previously.

One of my New Year resolutions will be to try to get into the discipline of dredging up enough creativity every two few months to crank out an original SF story. At first they may not read as well as 'bought ones' but I'm hoping that the habit of taking the imagination for a walk on a regular basis (like walking the dog) is an exercise that might in my case turn out to be life sustaining.

With luck this edition will be prepared during the Xmas holiday down time at work, so let me wish you all the best for you and yours during the 2004 holiday season and for the beginning of 2005.

I hope to see you at some time soon, maybe even at a 2005 Sydney Freecon.

Garry P Dalrymple

Late News

No mailing comments for this issue as I'm trying to write and print it before I see ANZAPA mailing #222. I would like to do a one or two day Sydney Freecon some time during the second half of 2005, preferably after the Worldcon and avoiding the long weekend cons. As you will read elsewhere, I managed to get a letter to the Editor published in the Sydney Morning Herald.

GPD December 17, 2004

Strange Encounters and Intoxications on the Bankstown Line?

One of the delights of working at Bankstown is the level of service offered by the Bankstown line trains. At each end of the day of work in a smoke free office you have the opportunity of standing for up to an hour waiting for a ten minute train trip between Bankstown and Campsie stations. After running the gauntlet of 'Revenue security officers' (\$200 fine for not having a ticket – no excuses), you can while away the morning or evening trying to avoid the down wind plume of children, the poor and the prematurely old looking smoking with impunity in front of the 'No Smoking-Penalty' signs.

Smokers seem to have the odd belief that non-smokers are insensitive in public places are insensitive to smoke if only the smoker can get a few paces up wind of the non-smokers. In such environments I can usually feel the nicotine rush before I can see where the smoker is.

On Tuesday (Melbourne Cup day, 02Nov04) I got on a train and immediately noticed a strong smell of solvent, expecting to see newly glued floor covering or possibly a spill from someone DIY shopping. Without thinking I said out loud 'Smells like someone's been glue sniffing'.

Sitting in the back of a double deck carriage were six of us, myself, a bloke in his mid forties holding a stubbed out fag and a open can of Bourbon and Coke mixer, a late 40 or early 50-ish looking woman of 'School Teacher' like demeanour and three teenagers. These Teenagers were of 'Pacific Islander' appearance, the boy from (and in school uniform!) Belmore Boys HS and one of the girls volunteered that she attended Wiley Park Girls HS.

They were very relaxed and I noticed that each was holding a blackened Plastic bag, which they were holding to their faces and from time to time breathing in and out of. I.e. they were sniffing Aerosol PAINT. The boy was even holding the black spray pack can which would have had to be shoplifted as for anti-graffiti reasons it is illegal to sell spray pack cans to children!

The process for Spray pack/Solvent intoxication is;

1. Get a large clear greengrocer's plastic bag
2. Spray/inflate the bag with the spray can
3. Hold the bag over your mouth and nose and breathe in deeply, repeat until 'spaced'.

Confession time - I did enjoy the smell of Airfix modelling glue as a boy (who didn't) but I am unsure if the 'high'

these kids were having was purely the effect of ingesting solvent or whether it is partly oxygen deprivation.

In any case I wouldn't wish to see a paint sniffer's lungs.

What would you do in the same situation?

This train was an express, going from Bankstown to Campsie without any chance to get off. The woman asked the kids a few neutral questions, the bloke with the Bourbon and a fag wasn't going to make a fuss and I was mentally making notes for you readers.

In response to the woman's questioning the boy volunteered the name of his school, that he enjoyed music and that he sniffed paint to get high.

During this time he added to a small puddle of very red coloured spit on the floor of the carriage near where he was sitting, which may have been evidence of damage to the surface of his lungs as a result of solvent abuse?

He also noticed and was disturbed that I had a Five dollar note in my top pocket and latter made a half hearted effort to ask 'have you got a spare dollar' before one of the girls told him to stop it. One of the girls named her school and said that she hated her whole family. This was immediately after seeing someone from the train window that she (rightly or wrongly) claimed to be her sister and who was wearing a skirt and top that belonged to her.

I got off the train at Campsie with some sense of relief. I had not felt any overt threat from the children as they seemed to 'Spaced-out' to care much about anything. The children stayed on the train as it carried on towards the City, although at one point as I was leaving the railway platform I saw that the boy was trying to swing from the carriage's open doorway.

Not a stunningly strange encounter, but this occurred in the week after a bunch of boys (possibly drunk?) crashed a stolen car into a telephone pole, abandoning one of their number (a student of Belmore Boys HS I think) to die on the footpath waiting for an Ambulance.

What do you think about **that** for a twilight zone trip, a whole page of text from a ten minute encounter?

'All the colours of water'

The photo from page 10 of TBS&E No 7

Next year the theme of some NSW primary school assessment tests (to discover state wide Numeracy and literacy between 2,000 schools etc.) will be 'Water'.

Knowing of my interest in saving water they asked if I could come up with a picture that involved water uses that was better than the existing unclear postage stamp sized image of some African people standing around a pump or well with buckets and plastic water drums.

I was given a digital camera and I took a picture the next morning before heading off to work. If all goes well, this image may be studied by up to 70,000 NSW school children next year!

This picture shows 14 saving water related things.

Going from left to right;

1. **Orange Tree and Grass** – these receive 'grey' bath and washing machine water (soapy water also helps to control many citrus fruit pests)

2. **A Black 20 L Drum with tap** - (it originally held Kerosene) holds clean 'blue' rain water which can be used for washing hands after garden or garage work. This water is always pleasantly warm to the touch due to passive solar heating.

3. **White 20 L bucket and red 25 L rectangular drum** (with large yellow funnel in place) these hold rainwater for pre-wash soaking of clothes. All rainwater is allowed to stand for a day or two to allow rain nucleating dust to settle before being placed for long term storage in ten air tight sealed 25 L Rectangular drums. Coloured rectangular drums are preferred for longer term storage of rainwater as their colouration prevents sunlight getting through to start algal (green muck) growth.

4. **The tall blue 45 L bucket** – This one holds grey water from bathroom or washing machine until it is needed for toilets or for watering the garden/front lawn. It is emptied and exposed to the Sun each Sunday to sterilize it and to avoid a build up of 'gunk'. Five similar buckets with lock down lids are used as medium term storage for blue rainwater, each one holding about a week's worth of clothes pre-soaking water.

5. **Black 20 L and two white 10 L buckets** are lined up outside the door to be used instead of 'press button' toilet flushing. The Black bucket goes indoors each night to collect the shower water that is in excess of the capacity of the two 10 L buckets that remain in the bathroom beside the indoor toilet.

6. **Outdoor Toilet** – Is still connected to town water (20 litre wall mounted cistern), but is now flushed by tipping a 10 L bucket of the grey water into it. When not in use the toilet door is left open to ensure that all surfaces are sterilised by the UV component of afternoon sun light.

7. **Dog drinking from water bowl** – Mystique Pukkanut, our Basenji in residence, naturally being a basenjij she prefers to drink the foul green water from the bottom of pot plants over lovely sparkling clear tap water. She finds drinking Human acceptable blue rainwater to be an acceptable compromise.

8. Behind Mystique is a White 20 L Bucket. This holds blue rain water which is mostly used to pre-soak clothing prior to washing. This Blue water is good to drink and so I boil about two litres of it a day to make cups of tea.

9. **Washing machine** – produces about 70 L of wash and rinse cycle water each use. The dirtiest looking water goes straight onto the back lawn. Clearer water goes in the 45L bucket for use during the week.

10. **Laundry tub** – water from washing machine is held here briefly and siphoned or transferred by bucket to the Grey water store, the 45 L blue bucket at

11. A **water filled 2 L Plastic Milk Bottle** is being used as door stop to keep the laundry door open.

12. (not visible) On cold winter nights a **3 L Plastic Milk Bottle** is partly filled with boiled rainwater to warm the air inside Mystiques' sleeping and feeding cage. Behind the dog you can see the open cage door.

13. The **Broom** (hanging on the wall) is used instead of a hose to clear leaves off footpaths and the driveway.

14. An **Unused 15 metre coiled hose**, seen through screen door and still in it's original box. We haven't used any garden hoses at Eulabah Avenue for watering the lawn or a garden bed for more than a year.

NB 'Blue Water' is rainwater collected after the second day of a rainy spell i.e. it comes of a rain cleaned roof and is generally so clear that it has a swimming pool water (filtered) like blue tint.

If left exposed to the air and in sunlight for a few days it will grow algae and become 'Green Water', still useful for washing, toilet and garden but I wouldn't drink it. First day rain water is often muddy from road soot, roofing rust and bird by product. It is not worth keeping.

'Grey Water' is what you get from the washing machine or from the shower/bathtub. Wouldn't want to drink it, but it's nutrient value is appreciated by the lawn and garden.

Garry goes to a **Water Wise Workshop** and gets **A Free Lunch!**

Tuesday, 26 October, 2004.
At Level 1 Bankstown Town Hall, 1 to 1.50pm

The building where I work is owned by the Bankstown City Council and it houses most of their administrative

staff, consequently I was able to notice and follow up on an invitation to attend a Water Wise Workshop and score a free lunch! This event was part of Bankstown City Council's response to the continuing Sydney Water shortage

For 'show and tell' purposes I took along copies of my 'Nil Bill' water rates notice, the laundry photo as well as two photos of Amanda Atkinson's 1,000,000 Litre backyard water feature (a 1 mega litre farm dam).

The seminar was presented by two Bankstown City Council's staff, a dozen people present for this session (mostly BCC staff) and about three times attended the earlier session.

Did you know that world wide 97% of the Earth's water is salt water, 2% is locked in Ice caps (for how much longer) and only 1% is running free in the form of rain, lakes and rivers etc.?

Sydney's water use is; 75% Residential and 25% Industrial. Water Use Table
Ave. Bankstown House 246,000 L pa 674 L per day
Ave Bankstown Apartment - 177,000 L pa 485 L per day
NB At Eulabah Avenue we use 36,000 L pa 100 L per day and these figures are not 'per head' adjusted

Much was made of the Sydney Water Retrofit Program, where for \$22 you get a visit by a registered plumber who fixes your drips and leaks AND installs a low water use shower head, a couple of hundred dollars worth of value. Mum had this done last year.

The Public Grey Water barrier.

The official Water people say – all Grey water retained for re-use must be treated as if it were evil incarnate and detained forever on your own property. The reality is that storing small quantities is OK and problem free. The reality is Solar and UV sterilization when dumped on lawns or Garden beds.

Initiative – Rain Tanks connected for toilets at Chester Hill and Panania libraries

Bankstown's 2003/2004 response - The Community is using 8% less with no visible harm to lifestyle. The Council's has managed a 28% reduction by watering municipal parks and reserves less frequently and with collected rain water.

The household front

- Check for cistern leaks with food colouring in the water
- Cistern weights to 'slow the flow' i.e. less than a full flush if this is all that is needed

Free Lunch – Sandwich plate of more identifiable contents than was served to our in house meetings

Sample bag and information sheets

They gave all workshop attendees a 'Drain Man' logoed linen bag and invited you to pick and choose among the leaflets on offer.

My bag ended up containing the following;

How much water does your household use? A survey of domestic water use adapted from a Victorian original.

Buying a rainwater tank, a Sydney Water publication, some useful data about water usage, and some domestic water saving tips, stuff you need to know in order to choose the right sized water tank for your application. Quotes average monthly rain figures for Sydney Observatory and Richmond (John Tebbutt's observatory?).

Save water in the Bathroom, a Bankstown City Council leaflet, advice on shower heads, running taps and toilet cisterns.

Save water in the Kitchen, a Bankstown City Council leaflet, advice on dripping taps, water efficient taps and other hints.

Save water in the Laundry, a Bankstown City Council leaflet, advice on water efficient rated washing machines, flow control valves and rain tank water for clothes washing.

Save water in the Garden, a Bankstown City Council leaflet, advice on mulch and compost, lawn cutting, less frequent deep watering for plants, trigger nozzle hoses drip irrigation soil wetting agents.

Installation of Rainwater Tanks, a Bankstown City Council leaflet, advice on available rainwater tank rebates.

New Mandatory Water Restrictions apply from 1 June 2004, a brief Sydney Water warning leaflet that gave no details of what the restrictions are.

Reliable plants for the Sydney region, Australian plants Society, lists of plants for several regimes, dry/moist, sunny/shaded, clay/sandy soils etc.

A small sachet of Rainsaver Water crystals, these absorb and hold many times their own weight of water and serve to keep soil moisture from evaporating.

Creating an Australian Native Garden, a Bankstown City Council booklet on local native plants.

Rain Tap, a small advertising leaflet (Bunnings?) about a diverter to install in your down pipes so that you can direct rain fall off to storage or down storm water drains as required.

A 'Go Green' Cornstarch Plastic bag, allegedly an 'eco friendly' form of plastic that is compostable and

biodegradable. We might test this by duration exposure.

What I saw but didn't collect;

Rain Tank supplier leaflets – got access to the same on the internet

Native Seedlings – I could have taken one or more native plants but I didn't think they would travel well,

Left unsaid - the lack of financial justification for water saving. Water at \$1 per cubic metre is too cheap. Rainwater or saved water storage costs far exceed this.

Some after thoughts

- Hot shower lights and thin drizzle shower rose gives much the same 'hot and wet' feel as a long hot 'full bore' shower.

- As a comfort thing, a long wallow in a hot bath (five minutes to fill) is probably more water efficient than a plug less 20 minute long shower (and the water is more easily recoverable for garden/toilets re-use etc.)

- The Islamic solution, applicable to Bankstown? Devout Moslems are required to pray five times a day and wash before prayer. Wouldn't rainwater 'straight from god' be better than processed tap water?

What I want for Christmas

- A Municipal delivery roll out of (top removed) 205 litre PVA drums to serve as garage/carport adjacent rain barrels for garden water or for composting bins. I.e. Tick the box on your council rates/dog license form, and attach your \$20 to \$40 cheque (to cover bulk purchase and municipal truck delivery costs)

- Placed on the local newspaper's Municipal announcements page a listing this month's recorded local rainfall (and evaporation) as well as next month's average rainfall (and evaporation) together with mention of a website where residents can describe their roof, garage, pool or backyard and get an estimate of how many litres/gallons they could have collected or lost to evaporation over a given period of time. i. e. get people involved in thinking about how much rain water they are letting flow past them.

- A Steel/PVA Drum into water tank conversion kit i.e. a simple kit with a PVC tap and an adhesive sealing pad that would allow a home handy man to turn a drum and a few bricks into a useable mini water tank and stand.

- A municipal survey of outdoor toilets and 'back of the house laundries i.e. identify what proportion of local

housing stock could be converted to 'rain assisted' without the need for 'whole house' re-plumbing costs.

A Remembrance / Armistice Day service, Sunday November 6, 2004 at the Bardwell Park RSL Club's Cenotaph

This will be the part of this issue that will take me the longest to complete, I will have to keep coming back to it as best I can. It was that sort of a day, emotions leading to memories and then back to emotions again.

Each time I review what I have written, it occurs to me that there are more things to say or better ways of saying it.

The day was as much as anything one of those many small steps in the process during this year past, the year after our father's death. Each is part of the process by which the events of a year ago to become more about our father's life than about the events of his death. Until now, Father has been usually referred to as 'He' or other present tense terms. This ceremony was one step in the process of his becoming your father' or 'your Grandfather'. The point of reference no longer being to a present or temporarily absent individual, but our late father is becoming to be defined by his relationship to those still living and to hand.

Each year on the Sunday closest to November 11, Remembrance / Armistice Day, the local RSL Club marks the passing of its members who have died in the previous year. As Father's death, Autopsy and delayed his funeral until after November 11, this meant father's passing was commemorated this year rather than during 2003.

It was as good day as you could expect under the circumstances. A fine clear sunny day with enough of a cool breeze during the service to lift the flags above the cenotaph, the RSL Ensign, the NSW State Flag and Australian Flag. The clang-clang of the flag pole ropes against tubular Aluminium making for an unmartial drum beat during the ceremony.

As they say, you just wish that the old fella could have been there to see it - but of course the point of the day was that he couldn't be there.

There was even a hint of sun tan lotion carried on the breeze, which I think was very fitting for an Australian

remembrance day, Rosemary for Anzac day and the smell of summer holidays past for November. I think that this would have amused the old diggers and they would have been pleased at the general lack of fuss.

As the cenotaph and memorial area backs onto the City bound railway tracks, several times during the service there would be the hiss and whoosh of trains arriving every few minutes.

The club had set out a double ranked row of chairs out in the sun on the driveway to the car park. It soon filled up with what was in effect the 2003/2004 graduating class of the recently widowed. The rest of us stood back against the wall of the Club and tried to make the best of the narrow nearly mid-day shade, keeping an eye on mum, the dutiful sons, daughters and grand kids.

The Bardwell Park road bridge which passes the front of the RSL Club and goes over the Railway Station is the only North-South, car or pedestrian access for a great distance either side of Bardwell Park. During the service many people were passing by, people coming and going from the railway station, going about their ordinary Sunday business, shorts and sandals, joggers pass, some would stop respectfully for a few minutes before quietly moving on. I would like to think that this was a good thing, ordinary people just enjoying the ordinary peace and tranquillity that our fathers had served to allow? I think this a more fitting memorial than the scramble of pro forma wreath laying of the Aldermen, members of parliament or their alternates.

Scattered thoughts during the ceremony

- The RSL club spokesman was slightly exasperated to still asking 'Lest We Forget' as so soon after each war we still seem to forget the lesson of war's great cost and sign up for the next. Australia's 'score' is 100,000 dead in all of our wars and every one is a whole family's private tragedy but it forms just a grain of sand on a beach impervious to the tide of history.

- A squadron of a dozen or so Air Force cadets provided an honour guard, I noticed that a few were girls and most were the children of recent migrants, several were of Asian descent

- One cadet managed to passed out in the sun, which is something I used to do myself even in the cool mornings of an Anzac day service. I made a point of going to talk to him after the ceremony and giving him a few words of re-assurance, coz I know from experience how much of a complete goose you feel after such an event.

- There was a smell of sun lotion in the breeze, which was fitting for an Australian Remembrance day. The Bardwell Park Bridge which passes the front of the RSL

Club and goes over the Railway Station is the only North-South car or pedestrian access for a few kilometres to either side of Bardwell park. During the service many people passed by, coming and going from the railway station, or going about their ordinary Sunday morning business, some in shorts and sandals. Joggers passed by, some would stop respectfully for a few minutes before quietly moving on. I would like to think that this is a good thing, ordinary people just enjoying the ordinary peace and tranquillity that is the fruit of our father's service? I thought this a more fitting memorial to the men than the regimented and slightly of pro-forma scramble of wreath laying by Aldermen, members of parliament or their alternates.

- At one point I was thinking how alien it be to commemorate this day under low Northern winter skies?

- The cenotaph and memorial area backs onto the City bound railway tracks, so several times during the service there would be the hiss and whoosh of trains arriving every few minutes, the clang-clang drum beat of the flag pole ropes against tubular Steel or Aluminium.

- On this morning slightly more than 30 veterans marched for their 41 comrades who passed on since the 2003 ceremony, they said that this was the highest annual death rate since the club started in 1958 and this year they needed two full brass plaques. Left hanging in the air and unanswered was the question of who will there be to march for these men, after the final roll call for the WW2 veterans. Will there be Korea and Vietnam veterans to march for the last WW2 diggers?

- In better days my father met at the 412 bus stop and spoke to the then 101 year old and still mobile battle of Jutland (1916) veteran. The links to the past thin then sever in the moments we are distracted by other things.

- Our Father's name is on the second brass plate, fourth from the top. As father was cremated, grave site, headstone or niche for father's ashes, this brass plate may become the only public marker to mark father's passing.

Blue Pages – Science/Astronomy

BAANSW / Sydney City Skywatchers

Astronomically speaking the September to November period was an almost complete loss. My only Stargazing efforts were navigational, while letterboxing at night. 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.

Sydney City Skywatchers (SCS) Committee meeting of November 17, 2004

Present were:

Janette Brennan, Elizabeth Budek, Elizabeth Cocking, Michael Chapman, Garry Dalrymple, Monty Leventhal, Nick Lomb and Harry Roberts.

Matters discussed during the committee meeting;

- What to do with the old Gold and Silver BAANSW badges previously given to Branch Presidents and Guest Speakers, resolved to give them out at meetings.
- A Sydney City Skywatchers shirt/jumper with the new name and logo, general support that it should have pockets.
- Dates and speakers for 2005, New Membership cards.
- Logo and letterhead, desirability of using a commonly available font. New SCS address labels done.
- Seasonal cards, a season's constellation to look at on one side, SCS contact and meeting details on the other.
- Discussion of the Donovan trust's meetings & finances.
- How to suggest to SCS members that bequests from members would be welcome. There is a great need to get the wording for this exactly right.
- Some correspondence may be being delayed for lack of new official letterhead
- Suggestions for routine (email sent) publicity for SCS meetings. 702 ABC's What's On, Inner Western Weekly, The Wentworth Courier, The Manly Daily, The North Sydney Weekly (North Shore times might be going too far, as it is read in Chatswood?), Cremorne paper, City of Sydney events listing, Georgie Vestie's 'City Talks' etc. (English Language ethnic and cultural newspapers?)
- A new Librarian is needed, previously when Committee and public meetings were on the same night we needed a Librarian and an assistant for members to access the library before public meetings.

- The Guest speaker for April 2005 is Dr. Nick Cannis who will speak on the Psychology of Space Flight, coming from the US for the occasion.

- Discussed suitable 2005 dates for observing the Moon.
- Committee dinner (instead of meeting) 15 December at the Catholic club, between Town Hall & Aust. Museum.

Garry's Sept. - Nov. Astronomy Observations report.

- During the election campaign I was able to interest Mayo Materazzo, a member of the Australian Democrat MLC Arthur Chesterfield-Evans' staff on considering Light pollution as a legislative environmental concern
- Was able to get a light pollution themed letter to the Editor published in an electorate local paper
- Saw a very bright counter sun (North of the Sun) from the bus on Monday or Tuesday November 9 or 10. This is the latest I can recall seeing this occasional 'winter' phenomena. It was caused by a passing cloud icy cloud as it was no longer visible when I got off the bus only a few minutes later.

TAMS meeting of November 18, 2004

Speaker – Peter Macinnis

A talk, 'Poisons and Poisoners' based on his recent book 'The Killer Bean of Calabar' (Published by Allen and Unwin, who seem to be doing a lot of good work with locally authored books)

- Almost a year since my last TAMS meeting, crowd with few exceptions are 'paired' retired folk and older ladies
- Met Lewis and Marilyn's house mate, a process of deduction starting from Ferret fancying stories overheard.

Peter originally an accountant – to Botany – to Teacher – to Education measurement at HQ – to Powerhouse Museum – to Aust Museum – to School teacher – to Webster's publishing (online Encyclopaedia) and the writing of Books, Books, Books about Science and History

- PG Wodehouse' (1960) quote about the dullest long speech ever given about an unsatisfactory book – where a simple apology would have been sufficient enough
- Black smokers, deep sea volcanic vents fingered as the source and point of origin of all 'Life as we know it'
- Life on Earth 'as we know it' is based on the triumph of some life forms over the killer poison – Oxygen.
- Our Bodily development is shaped by Apoptosis, some cells deciding to die i.e. to free your fingers
- Insect use of poison, Scarlet bodied moth eats poisonous leaves then pukes over it's loved one, making

her inedible to predators, she also wipes some of this poison onto their eggs, predator proofing them!

- Colocynth mentioned in bible (2Kings iv 38-41) and poison drawn out by processing it into a useful foodstuff (Australian experience of cycads and nardoo peas?)

- Historically and mythologically poisoning is seen as the national trait of 'swarthy' others

The Classic beauty Sophonisba poisoned herself to avoid a coerced marriage.

In Shakespeare, Juliet was actually poisoned twice, the first time by her nurse who weaned her by applying a wormwood extract on her nipples. Romeo's conduct would have been seen to be inexplicable to his contemporaries, as most educated folk of the time were well acquainted with the symptoms of many types of poison.

Keeping up appearances

- The noted beauty Sidal used Arsenic to achieve a pale youthful looking skin, but the catch was that more was needed each time to sustain effect. After a Laudenum overdose, her husband buried her with a book of poetry. He subsequently dug her up some years after, with the effect that the recovered book of poems then became a best seller due to its history and notoriety.

The ancient Egyptians invented and used Kohl, a powdered form of antimony oxide as a cosmetic.

The Elizabethans favoured a white lead based face powder, while a recent archaeology discovery suggests that the Romano Britons favoured the less toxic tin oxide for a white face paint or cosmetic base.

- The use of a carefully calculated sub-lethal dose of Thallium were used as lice treatment, as when all body hair drops off, the lice go with it.

- Botox has moved from being a rare non-surgical treatment for Lazy eye to a being a common and repeated feature of the 'Ab Fab' lifestyle. It has also come to be used as an effective treatment for seriously sweaty armpits and migraine headaches.

- The Arsenic eaters of Styria, a province of Austria, birthplace of the 'Governator' would eat chunks of it with very little effect coz in its natural form it is mostly insoluble, i.e. you would need to grind it to a fine powder etc. to be able to absorb a lethal dose.

- Arsenic was used before Formaldehyde embalming became generally available. Large quantities were used to preserve US civil war dead in a lifelike state for shipment home and burial – look but don't kiss!

- World Bank funded Tube wells in Bangladesh were sunk through randomly Arsenic laden sediments. Drinking the water from some of them can result in slow poisoning. If the water is known to be contaminated, it

can be made safe by letting it stand with of a hand full of iron filings thrown in!

Occupational poisonings

- Include the famous 'Fossy jaw' of match makers, exposure to phosphorus in the matches caused bone to dissolve, frequently resulting in hideous facial deformity.

- Mad Hatters disease, they were not actually mad, but had facial and bodily twitches from exposure to Mercury used in the felting of wool and fur into felt for hats.

- The Tizla river incident in Europe, which was blamed on an Australian run company. Contaminated liquid broke through a dam wall and killed a major river system all the way to the Black sea, a tide of dead fish? It is not uncommon for floods in ex Iron curtain countries to routinely wash unsafely stored, abandoned or illegal dumps of industrial waste / toxins into waterways

Artistic poisoning

- Candido Portinari the communist Atheist artist frequently used toxic pigments for his vibrant paintings of religious scenes and South American Dictators.

- Van Gogh was 'mad', but his doctor believed that the major cause of his abnormality was his habit of eating his paints!

- Absinth, was frequently depicted as being a drug used by sordid older men to 'break in' a new and innocent mistress.

- Ergot and ergotism from mouldy Rye grain. Rye ergot has been traditional folk remedy and abortifacant. As the distribution of the 'Black Death' is unsatisfactorily explained it is thought that it might be implicated as ergot poisoning does reduces disease resistance and the 'Black Death' favoured rye eating areas. The difference in diet Rye Vs Wheat was responsible for the split of Teutonic peoples into Franks and Germans. During the Witch trials, ergotism probably coloured the evidence of the accusers and at one time an outbreak of ergotism stopped Russia expanding into Turkey, as first the horses died and then the men got unwell from ergot toxins leaking out of the skin of their dying mounts.

Classical Poisonings

- The attribution of Hemlock as the means of Socrates' death was questioned, until the incident of Duncan Gow's sandwich. His children made him a sandwich of 'cress' (actually hemlock) and the diary entries of the progress of his death matched Socrates' classically listed symptoms.

- Abraham Lincoln was on Mercury pills, at 42 times the safe dose. George Washington was bled to death after being poisoned by calomel

- Luis the fourteenth was lucky to survive childhood as the court drinking vessels were heavily contaminated with Antimony.

- Napoleon may have been poisoned by goshier gas (which is implicated in cot death instances) as arsenic gas was released from the wall paper pigments by stuff living in the fish and animal product wallpaper paste.

- Tetrodotoxin (?) is a microbe poison that is found on a lot of occasionally poisonous Frogs, Fish and Octopi. The molecule kills cells by blocking each cell's many sodium pores, leading to high inside cell sodium levels and death.

- Mongooses and Cobras each have some immunity to cobra venom as their cells use a slightly different set of Acetyl choline and receptors to cobra prey species.

I liked the talk so much I bought the book. In due course I will try to do up a review of this book.

Green Page – Political

Politics of Scepticism - a mini report

Are Sceptics (members of the Australian Sceptics at least) Science Fiction fans? Some people say that they all are and some know that some aren't. Just ahead of the (Sydney) 2004 Australian Sceptics convention in November it occurred to me that I could try to survey the convention membership and find out.

I used a survey based on the survey that I had used at Conflux and CSF con so as to be able to use a 'fannish' basis in comparisons. At nearly the last minute, facing a blank half page I added several political questions, the results of which form the basis of this mini report. Mostly I asked the Sceptics for their opinions about their own perceptions of individual and collective political viewpoint and also about which political parties they felt had the most and least Sceptical political agendas.

I hope in time to get some part of the complete report on Sceptics convention goes Vs SF convention goes published first in the Australian Sceptics journal (which may render it uncreditable for ANZAPA purposes) before doing a fanish element analysis for this smaller circulation newsletter.

The Mini Report

Many of us would agree that a Sceptical state of mind is a good thing to have, but what actually characterises a Sceptic?

As the question, Sceptic or SF Fan had recently been a point of debate in both communities I took the opportunity of the 2004 (Sydney) Sceptics convention to revive a survey that I had previously used at some Science Fiction (SF) conventions to seek answers to this question. I wanted to see how alike or different SF fans are to Sceptics.

Irrespective of where you stand on this issue SF fans and Australian Sceptics have at least three things in common.

Firstly, a conscious decision to opt in and self identify as a SF fan or Sceptic, i.e. many other people read SF or think Sceptically but do not choose to become a 'SF fan' or a 'Sceptic'.

Secondly, it is a point of view commonly held (and with some evidence) that SF Fans / Sceptics think more frequently, deeply and critically about SF or the paranormal than do most other people.

Thirdly there are 'brand name' issues with the media and public perception of exactly what a SF fan or Sceptic is. Depending on who you ask, 'Science Fiction' may be Starwars, Anime, Special effects based movies, Thick Unicorn and Crystal Novels, Star Trek fanaticism or Teenage Witch and Demon infested TV shows. Sceptics are broadly claimed to be closed minded UFO deniers or Cynics etc.

This isn't how we see ourselves and is a barrier to public understanding of what we see to be the worth of our movement.

Is there a notably Sceptical or Unsceptical political party? The answer is well – perhaps. The four most frequently mentioned 'Sceptical' parties were;

Labor (9),
The Greens (8),
Australian Democrats (7)
and the Liberals (6).

But, the four most frequently mentioned 'Un-Sceptical' parties were;

Christian Democrats (11),
Family First (8),

The Greens (7)
& One Nation (6).

Setting these two sets of responses against each other and giving **Most Skeptical** mentions a value of 1 plus and **Least Skeptical** mentions a value of 1 minus, you get an adjusted an 'Australian Skeptical Spectrum' of the following;

Labor 8+
Australian Democrats 5+
Liberals 2+
The Greens 1+
Nationals, Socialist Alliance, CEC, Unity, Aust
Progressive Alliance (all on -2)
One Nation -5
Family First -8
Christian Democrats -11

As many survey respondents recorded several 'most' or 'least' Skeptical party nominations then some sort of optional preference system seems more appropriate than declaring a single **'Most'** or **'Least'** Skeptical party. I.e some 'votes' are worth a half, a third, or a sixth of a single 'full', 'most' or 'least' nomination. Extending the 'Skeptical state of mind' image a little further suggests another way of expressing a result. Assume that Australia had a 'Skeptical State' and an 'Unskeptical State', then their respective Senate representatives would be;

For the **SKEPTICAL STATE**, the Six Senators (quotas) are:

Liberals 1 Senator (1.17),
Labor 1 Senator (1.69),
The Greens 2 Senators (1.87),
& the Australian Democrats, 2 Senators (1.87)

For the **UNSKEPTICAL STATE's** Six Senators (quotas) are:

Nationals 1 Senator (0.66),
The Greens 1 Senator (1.42),
One Nation 1 Senator (1.2),
Christian Democrats 2 Senators (2.08),
Family First 1 Senator (0.86),
Australian Democrats no Senators at (0.04)

How would you like to see Mr Howard/Latham trying to work with a Senate of that make up?

Golden Pages – Science Fiction

Garry's notes of the September 17, 2004 Sydney Futurian meeting

Topic - 'Matter Transmission stories, Faults and effects'

Present were; Garry Dalrymple, John Fox, Ross Mitchell and Ted Scribner – Apologies from Diane Fox and Ian Woolf (currently in Canada)

News

GD – I'm standing for federal parliament, seat of Watson (next to seat of Holmes?)

RM – Alternate History books

JF – Affiliation with UTS staff/students association proceeds slowly

GD – Letter in defence of SF reading leading to a rational and Skeptical outlook published in Australian Skeptics Journal (Editorial comment in support as well)

- Liturgy of the church of St Thomas the Doubter, *Priest* 'We are gathered here today in the presence of the lord and with the spirit of St Thomas'

Congregation response "Are you sure?"

RM – Reading Greg Egan's 'Luminous' at the moment comment – 'Strip mining ideas' good technological SF

- a Simon Brown sighting reported, a book launch at the usual places etc on September 16

- Edwina Harvey continues to be experiencing medical difficulties

- The potential of Ipod data storage capacity as a media for talking book storage, particularly the current crop of e-novels and project Gutenberg books etc.

- The shortcomings of the recently televised Stephen Hawking Bio-flic were discussed, an athletic youth of great intellect re-interpreted as a life long 'Nerd'.

TS - Ted Scribner is currently alternating between Cronulla and Blackheath ahead of a 2005 as a 'Blackheathen'.

GD – communication from Georgie Vestie about listing Sydney Futurian 'Talks'

TS – A crowded year for Australian SF&F conventions and Festivals, only Sydney seems to be lacking a fan run SF convention?

RM – Evidence found for an increasing rate of expansion for the Universe

The Topic Discussed

- A short story about a matter transmitter connected to an elsewhere, ends up being used as a dead cat exchange unit.

- With the aid of Tele-presence devices your seat of consciousness can be wherever you think you are, effectively a form of matter transmission?

- The Lost In Space program had episodes involving an ancient abandoned teleport device that connected the Robinsons with Earth (thought controlled aim?). This was used to bring back a bottle of dry cleaning fluid, and to call NASA – reverse charges!

Carl Sagan's "Contact" book, involving the building of a huge theme park sized matter transmitter (in secret) from an alien radio message, was much better than the movie. Jodie Foster has 'peaked'.

In 'A for Andromeda' by Fred Hoyle and John Elliott a message containing a teleport device is received.

- Reversal point stories, several known, set in remote places on Earth, Space or achieved with technology, sometimes a by product of matter transmission, you go to a place or through a machine and you come out exactly the same – except your molecules are re-arranged, Left Hand / Right hand isomers etc. can't digest normal food etc.

- The Split transmission problem, i.e. in Star Trek Next Generation, the 'Two Rikers' episode results in two identical Rikers, one who was left behind for seven years until re-discovered by the Enterprise.

- The two Kirks episode, from the original Star Trek series, where a faulty matter transmitter creates two copies and personality is divided and polarised by the duplication, into a good and bad, strong and weak Kirk twin, neither of whom can survive on their own un-re-integrated. A Star Trek short story where a miss connected component in a Klingon Star Ship changes every ones sex – a ship full of 'girly' Klingons. Kirk and Spock investigate, Kirk becomes a big girls blouse, Spock doesn't (... Interesting...), Bones falls in love with his captain (Kirk gets PMT?)

- Mix and Blend problems The Fly,(help me I'm Andre!) where a man and a fly share the teleport booth and both come out part man/fly.

- Membranes or 'Space Folds' i.e. a place light years away may only be metres away through the Membrane or Space Fold that exists in special places or can be artificially generated.

- The problem of creatures that live in Hyperspace or between the dimensions – Deep Space Nine's Bajoran Prophets? And other more hostile beings that travellers have to deal with.

- Short story about conduits for stuff, place to place without intervening existence. The inventor / Narrator did invent these and discovered all the rules, lives in a life support wheelchair that is connected by these conduits to a large and distant life support machine.

- In the book The Physics of Star Trek, by **Krause** a scanner needed for a matter transmitter would need to be 4,000 km across to be able to detect the fineness of detail needed to 'read' matter for transmission.

All the bridges were rusting in **Larry Niven's** 'A hole in Space' - ES

Conservation of charge prevents matter being transmitted at faster than the speed of light – RM?

- Stepping discs, short range matter transmission were invented by the puppeteers in **Larry Niven's** universe

- 'Jaunting', a form of telepathic matter transmission from **Alfred Bester's** 'Tiger Tiger'. An innate human ability called on by extreme need but capable of being learnt. It re-shaped society coz anyone could go anywhere at any time, as long as you knew where 'where' was. Allowed for an effect like 'Flash mobbing'.

- 'Bistro Maths Drive' from **Douglass Addams**

- 'Infinite Improbability Drive' from The Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy by **Douglas Addams**

- Arthur Dent et al pushed to the restaurant at the end of the Universe by police gunfire at a computer bank they were hiding behind from The Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy by **Douglas Addams**

- Star Trek got it's teleport facility coz they couldn't see how they could afford to film the Enterprise landing! Star Trek teleporters have an unstated difficulty, that of aim, in that they successfully materialise people at just on the surface of an uncharted geography.

- Lightning, several stories of being struck by lightning and instantly transported in time of place, i.e. **Mark Twain's** 'The Connecticut Yank in King Arthur's court'

- Wormholes 'natural' or man made connecting greatly distant points of space by a very short distance. One way, two-way, temporary, permanent, cycling?

- Technology that goes with you, i.e. Dr Who's Tardis

- Technology / terminals at both ends, i.e. SG1's Stargate rings, brings with them the problem of the limited number of settings for point to point travel i. e. only one per planet.

- The second telephone problem, how do you get the booth to the distant place you want to get to first?

- Unscreened delivery problem, door to door dial up delivery of pizzas or nukes or germs through the teleport booth system.

- Step through portals, problem with the importance of having to remember where you came in if you ever want to get out

- Broadcast forms, Star Trek where they can beam you anywhere and beam you back as opposed to the teleport bracelets of Blake's Seven where the bracelet gives you a point to point communication and a target

- Bloater Drive by **Harry Harrison**, a sit in shipping container stretches all the way, ties up at distant end then retracts to normal size carrying you there.

Magical/make a wish types, rub a talisman, recite a spell of like **Edgar Rice Burrough's** 'John Carter of Mars',

just wish upon a star (planet) and be swept away into the distant past of Mars (by the power of the eighth ray!).
Gulliver Jones' Holiday – an impoverished US Naval man gets swept up in a carpet and ends up on Mars

Notes ahead of the October Infinitas meeting

Topic - 'Who would you like to see in charge'

Your choice of Science Fiction and Fantasy characters that you would like to see running Australia after the October Federal Election.

- 1) **Governor General - President John Sheridan** - Hero of the battle of the line and a man who came back from Kaza doom i.e. dealing with the 'shadows' of Australian politics (or the next 2 Bush Presidents) should be no greater problem.
- 2) **Prime Minister - Count Aral Vorkosigan**, decades of prior parliamentary experience in the Barrayar House of Counts (without a clear majority) in times of peace and during the threat of war/terrorism.
- 3) **Defence Minister (and deputy PM) - Honor Harrington**, splendid military record, only possible remaining career trajectory is into politics, a motivator and commander of men (and women), breaker of many career 'glass ceilings'. Also has Stead holder political and administrative experience.
- 4) **Treasurer – Gandalf the White or Saruman the Grey**, this is a portfolio that really does need a wizard's talents (but not one of those doddering fools from Hogwarts), uncertain if the job requires a grey or darker class of wizard?
- 5) **Foreign Affairs Minister - Jerry Cornelius** - The human chaemoleon, adaptable to any situation, more foreign affairs than Don Juan Casanova
- 6) **Minister for Youth Affairs - Buffy or Harry Potter** - Both have had extensive experience battling the 'demons' of youth issues and other crises that regularly affect the youth portfolio.
- 7) **Science Minister - Spock from Star Trek (Fascinating!) or Major Samantha Carter from SG1**, each candidate has a universal grasp of any scientific issue, technology or problem and can usually find a solution within 45 minutes!
- 8) **Health Minister - Dr Jekyll** (better than the current/prospective Mr Hyde) and less likely to cross dress / embarrass than the current incumbent.
- 9) **Small Business portfolio - Lord Mark Vorkosigan** Possesses start-up capitalist experience under several legal (and illegal) regimes, truly a minister who would be in touch with the 'Small Business Man'.
- 10) **Ambassador to Washington** – Appointing **Ambassador Kosh** would certainly change the Washington-Canberra 'special relationship'. **Crocodile**

Dundee/Paul Hogan – needs the work. Well that's what they think there getting, so why disappoint them!

Books Read, October 2004 to January, 2005

- 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 & Jack Williamson**, 158 pages © 1965
- 03 to 30 November, 'The Spike' by **Damien Broderick**, 280 pages © 1997
- 27 to 28 November, 'SS-GB' by **Len Deighton**, 402 pages © 1978
- 30 Nov to 07 December, 'Defending the National Tuckshop' by **Michael Cathcart**, 222 pages © 1988
- 27 to 29 November, 'There is No Darkness' by **Joe Haldeman** and **Jack C Haldeman II**, 245 pages © 1983
- 29 Nov to 20 Dec. 'Sacred Treasure, Secret Power' by **Guy Patton** and **Robin Mackness**, 330 pages © 2000.

Brief Book Reviews

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 A universe with a populated Solar System in. Just started this by **Frederik Pohl** and **Jack Williamson**, 158 pages © 1965

In the The Spike, **Damien Broderick** tries to take us on a tour of that undiscovered country, the future. The book defines this as being also an undiscoverable country as it lies beyond that point where extrapolations of the rate of progress of present day technologies to the lifestyles of the future must inevitably break down. A range of technologies are discussed in the sections of this book. What they have in common is that each has a rate of

progress / development that seems to be accelerating as time goes forward. He does a fairly comprehensive job of charting what 'progress' in each of these fields might ultimately lead to, economically, technologically and to the human societies that may be created in the wake of the 'Spike', when Science may appear to be magic and 'God-like' powers a daily reality. A difficult read, but worth sticking with, as it is a Science Fiction Literate account. The same book written in isolation of an understanding of SF would need to be very much thicker, to explain concepts and situations not encountered in 'Mundane' writing. It also features multiple references to the opinions and observations of David Bofinger, a Sydney fan known to Sydney Futurian meetings. In Len Deighton's SS-GB we have an example of a main stream 'thriller' writer's one off excursion to the land of SF via the well trod path of an alternate history story. The Point of Departure (POD) for this book is that Britain was invaded in 1940 by Nazi Germany and that Russia was not. The story is set a year after the capitulation and Britain is under the control of competing SS and German Army interests. The point of view character is 'Archer of the yard' a Scotland Yard police inspector who is desperately trying to walk the thin and shifting line between minimum necessary collaboration and principled resistance. No justification is offered for this POD, the invasion of Britain just happened in spite of a lack of German landing craft or air superiority. The non-invasion of Russia is a bit hard to swallow. Hitler's Germany and Russia's Stalin co-exist and Karl Marx's body is to be dug up for a trip to Moscow. There is a puzzling murder, British Atomic bomb secrets, a plot to liberate King George V and to entangle the US into the fight against Hitler. Coincidentally, all of this action is set to take place just before Pearl Harbour may or may not take place. Would it be asking too much to see an alternate history book where Hitler doesn't win?

'Defending the National Tuckshop' by Michael Cathcart, a non fictional Victorian centred view of history of the events of 1931, when under the stresses of the depression, Australia very nearly had it's own 'Munich Beer Hall Putsch' organised by Conservative, Anti-Catholic, Anti-Communist and 'pro-Empire' establishment elements. The book's several sections cover a fair bit of the Australian history that they do not teach in schools as it is still 'too political' for current State and Federal Government parties to want to have widely discussed. It makes me very curious as how my Grandfather's were affected by these events, as both were 'diggers' in a small soldier settlement area town that had closer links to Victorian rural affairs than to the NSW capital (and Lang stronghold) Sydney, By their

employment one Grandfather would have been part of the 'establishment' and the other would have been an 'essential services' worker. It is hard to see that they would have been unaware of events across the border or similar movements in their own town.

Over the holidays I might get round to looking into some family history and to get round to reading my copy of D.H. Lawrence's 'Kangaroo' which is a fictionalized version of the key events referred to in this book.

In 'There is No Darkness' by Joe Haldeman and Jack C. Haldeman II, the authorship of this book is of course a curiosity, a genuine collaboration, an attempt at copyright bequeathment or an uncle attempting to give a nephew a leg up in hard to break into publishing circles? The book gives no clear explanation of the explanation of the relationship between the co-authors. Made up of two Asimov's magazine published Novellas 'There is No Darkness' is about a Worlds' touring spaceship of 'college' age students and their adventures on several planets. It is a bit clichéd, a giant sized naive off worlder makes new friends, fights Bulls, Polar Bears and Sharks as a later day Gladiator, gets kidnapped / recruited as a reluctant mercenary conscript with characteristic Haldeman battle sequences. The tour around the populated Planets could just as easily have been a novel about a 19th century innocent abroad's adventures while touring of 'old' Europe. At the end of the book there springs a 'SFnal turn', in the form of a typical Haldemanesque change of mind.

'Sacred Treasure, Secret Power' Is about scholarship of the sort usually encountered in the pages of the Fortean Times. This book deals with the real or imagined history of a region of Southern France near close to the Spanish border, the Roman Province of Septimania. It reads as a very involved set of interlocking stories involving the alleged descendants of Jesus Christ, the treasure of the Temple of Jerusalem, Romans, Visigoths, Moors, The Templar Knights, a medieval Jewish Kingdom, hidden treasures, Masonic secret societies and all manner of historical loose ends piling up for interpretation. All of the above may very well be true but it is a body of history that has well and truly fallen off the table of accepted national histories.

Notes ahead of the November Sydney Futurian meeting

November 19, 2004 – Discussion Topic **Racism & Xenophobia in Science Fiction**

Racism and Xenophobia in SF&F stories can be employed as a reflection to human society or as plot

spackfilla to save the need for detailed explanation of background and alien motivations.

Racism and Xenophobia are one of the clichés of Science Fiction, come the day that we step out into the Universe all the ills of the past would have been overcome, Racism will be a quaint memory, until we meet and observe it in the backward alien, whose story parallels that of 20 the century earth? - Or the evil conquering space aliens arrive on Earth with ill intent!

There is a need to separate stories involving R&X from 'ordinary' stories 'conquest procedural' stories, oppression and control, conquering aliens keeping the humans down and in their place in the galaxy wide empire.

Racism (as opposed to species-ism!) requires the two parties to be of the same species, but different races. Xenophobia is much more available, you can fear the other of all possible species and for reasons that are well justified or just prejudiced.

Not much Xenophobia is ever explained, Racism frequently explained to the point of highlighting it's absurdity to the observer's perspective.

Some broad classes of stories

- A. Humans suffering R&X from Aliens
- B. Humans dishing out R&X to Aliens
- C. Humans observing R&X among Aliens
- D. Aliens observing R&X within human cultures

I feel that it is necessary to rule out stories that involve 'Speciation', where a new underclass evolves or is modified into a new species.

Fantasy – Many Fantasy stories feature enemies deserving only of unreasoning, automatic hatred and extirpation? Fear of the 'other' is Xenophobia but is not necessarily Racism, unless in LOTR Elves, Orcs humans and Dwarves are all races of the same species?
Genocidal Species – They just hate everybody and want to kill, kill, kill, Daleks, Cylons, ID4 aliens and their ilk, hatred and aggression as a flaw of their character or their great strength?

'Structured' Societies – encountered or basis of the story
 Xenophobic cultures – Some species seen as aggressively xenophobic and not much else.

In **Patrick Tilley's Amtrak Wars** series the American underground culture sees itself to be superior to the plains people and Mexicans, the Iron Masters have a systematic hierarchy of racial superiority based on closeness of origins to Japan.

In **Lois McMaster Bujold's** 'all human' universe Quaddies and Hemaphrodites suffer some racism coz they are different, Cetagendan culture is xenophobic (possibly with justification due to their improved genes) Barrayarans are xenophobic to all strangers coz only the people you know are free of nuclear induced mutation.

Dr. Who would be against it on principle.

Star Trek preaches about it, like it was a prime directive, frequently encounters aliens acting badly, one episode the harlequin aliens who are Black on the Left persecute the aliens who are Black on the Right.

Stories where contact with the main character or his/her party causes a racist and hierarchical alien society to collapse, simply by showing that the universe it doesn't have to be run that way.

Stories where the 'message' is that automatically taking the side of the prettiest or most human appearing alien turns out to have been the wrong. Humanness being about commonly held values in addition to outer appearances and sexually compatible appendages.

The Presumption that any alien threat will bring all human cultures together (in the face of all historical evidence to the contrary!), as in the movie Independence Day 4.

A Story where the Chinese won WW3 a hundred years ago and the world has since been disarmed and stagnated under communist party 'leadership', then they make contact with a planet settled by aggressive Racist Southern Americans with Nukes, Space ships a 40 to 1 sex imbalance and a desire to talk to the 'President of the United States', or else!

David Lupoffs **Space Blues**, each US culture has a planet, Racist White New Alabama goes to war with new Haiti and loses. Haiti wins by employing zombie troops, mix and match from their and enemy was dead. New Alabama has to live with defeat, inversion of it's racist culture and occupation by the piebald Zombies of their former war dead.

Uhura and Kirk's 'kiss' from Star Trek, an air kiss, or lips passing in the night? Censored or cancelled in some Southern US states?

In UFO (the 1960s continuing into 1984) Black Moon base staff refuse command coz racism is still an issue. The 'oh didn't you know I was Black' stories, Robert Heinlein was fond of these, now largely devoid of shock value.

Instances of **Reverse Racism**, as a matter of routine, each white hero has to have a black sidekick or flight deck character (but never two?) – Jeremiah, Dark Angel, Sliders, Voyager, Enterprise etc.

Most of Star Trek's Klingons are now Black actors, now that they are mostly good, Cardassians have British accents/diction, because they are mostly bad?

Tuvok had to be a black Vulcan to be on the Voyager's flight deck, i.e. on most post ST original etc.

Cold war SF stories, where the Chinese were always out to get US, because they were 'alien' to US readers, and Communist and writing about the Russians doing it was too close to popular fears for comfort or entertainment.

Robert Heinlein novel where the Chinese have taken over, they allow unsupervised freedom of religion (which they don't in real life) which allows the US underground to form, they achieve victory by the use of Asian American suicide bombers, who release an ethnic tailored plague that achieves American Ethnic cleansing and World wide genocide of all Chinese. Long live the American way!

Garry's News

- **SF / Sci-Fi TV shows** are making their seasonal re-appearances or debuts on free to air TV. Among the programs that I have noticed and have been following;

Twilight Zone

Dead Zone

Firefly

Jeremiah

Voyager

Silver Sun & Dr. Who on ABC children's slot

SG1

Randall and Hopkirk (deceased)

- **Friends and Fans encountered**

(Futurians and past-urians?)

- At the Australian Skeptics convention (in Sydney), John August, Helen Fischer, Alex Rafaelovich (going to go to the US to work for the UN and hoping to see more US SF cons) and Brian Walls

- At a TAMS Poisons and Poisoners event, I met Brad Row and a woman who is Lewis Morely, Marilyn Pride's house partner (a three ferret household!)

- I was permitted to survey the membership of the Skeptics convention on book readership and a few other questions using a modified version of the survey I had taken to the Conflux and Convergence SF conventions. One aim of this process was to see if Australian Skeptics are SF fans or not.

Seasonal Sci-Fi Television Reviewed - November to January

At this time of the year on local free to air Television the commercial stations pull their 'good' programs and it is a parade of runts and 'brave' programming decisions. Far from being a season of discontent, this is to me one of the most interesting viewing times of the year as some old and new Sci-Fi programs re-emerge. The forests of Canada usually get a good workout for US or off planet venues.

Firefly – Joss Whedon's Genre stretch that goes a bit too far even for a tolerant Sci-Fi watching audience? Sort of a transposition of post US civil war cowboy stuff to the stars, with star ships instead of horses. Possibly this was an attempt to emulate the success of **Space Above And Beyond** which was well able to re-tread and rehabilitate classic 'men and women at war' stories as Space Opera. The adventures of a bunch of war buddies and their Firefly star ship on the unsettled edges of the interplanetary frontier makes intregueing viewing, consider the substitution of 'Reevers' for 'Renegade Injuns' and newly terraformed planets for plains states ethnically cleansed of native Americans. A movie of this series is said to be in the making, pending the usual Hollywood-speak for delays and disappointments.

Jeremiah – This series from the maker of Babylon 5 deserves a lot of tolerance, if for only one thing, it sets up a post apocalypse world that does give a credible explanation why all the survivors look like 30 ish Californian actors (like in **Dark Angel**). A worldwide epidemic killed everyone over the age of puberty fifteen years before the present, so everyone has unresolved parent child issues readily available for flashback episodes. Not sure what US market this was intended for, as sex scenes, comely breasts and nipples appear in most episodes. Jeremiah is a sort of new age 'Mild Max' on a quest in search of a Valhalla Sector that has all the vaguely remembered good stuff of the past and all the 'answers' that Jeremiah is looking for.

Voyager – is of course Voyager, a certified runt of the litter from the Star Trek kennels. Deserves better than the 11 pm to midnight to 1 am, (do the 'Call me, Call me Now' phone sex and SMS pickup/chat line advertisers really get their moneys worth from a Voyager audience of Sci-Fi fans?) Frequent happy families, Love boated (older and younger demographic appeal simultaneous sub-story lines) and 'issues' episodes. Very occasionally a Science Fiction based episode sneaks in.

Silver Sun – A very brave local TV production (40 25 minute episodes) when you consider what they are trying to do. I think it is aimed at late primary school age children (actors 2 to 5 years older than target audience etc.) In some ways it is a children's version of Space Island One, with all sorts of borrowings from established Sci-Fi shows (a girl with a borg-ish implant who is better with computers than with people. Imagine a star ship sent on a 90 year mission to the 'Silver Sun' with a cargo of 500 odd frozen colonists. That's a much longer mission duration to sign on for than Janeway's return to Alpha quadrant mission! The Silver Sun crew consists of four adults (two married and the parents of the 6 to 9 year old boy and girl) and seven 14 to 16 year olds, 3 boys and 4 girls. Imagine the hormone hell that that would eventually be in real life. So far all the budding romances are all strictly above the neck. With (celibate) parent figures and Swots, Jocks, trouble maker and dreamers among the cadets all sorts of playground relevant, interpersonal issues are explored, without the need to cut classes, Degraasi High School to the Stars? Some Science Fiction issues do turn up every second episode or so and they are explained, worked through in kiddie speak terms. A lot less Science than the **Skywatcher** program, which featured the lives and adventures of children at and around the Parkes Radio Telescope. Silver Sun is run as part of the ABC's afternoon children's TV line up, at 5.00 pm to Dr Who's 6 pm slot.

SG 1 - every second episode or so and they are explained, worked through in kiddie speak terms.

Dr Who - every second episode or so and they are explained, worked through in kiddie speak terms.

Randall and Hopkirk (deceased) – A deceased detective remains 'tied' to his work partner and is able to help out in an un-incarnate manner. Features an ex-Dr Who as Wyvern (God?) and Emelia Fox. Adventures on the spirit plane and detective work on behalf of the deceased.

Grey end Page – ANZAPAN

LATE BREAKING NEWS – Back Cover

Garry and the Dancing Man of Sydney, a first ever publication of a letter to the Editor in a major Australian Newspaper.

Friday December 10 was a very good day for me. I arrived at work and there among my 24 awaiting emails was one from the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) advising that my letter had been short listed for publication. As I hadn't read that far through the paper while I was travelling to work I opened the paper at the letters page for a first time and there it was!

The Sydney Morning Herald is a serious newspaper and as it serves Australia's biggest city being published on the letters to the Editor page is a big deal. The people at work, Education people all thought it was a good letter and a big deal. I believe that they receive 500 to 1,000 letters every day and they only have room to publish about a dozen or so each day.

For me this was a 'triple bonus points' event. It is my first success at getting a letter to the Editor published (after about a dozen half hearted attempts). The letter mentions my father directly and I would like to think that it is also in some small way a nod towards a continuation of my uncle's achievements (writing as 'Gladys Rhead of Roseville') in getting letters published in the SMH). It's publication also marks just over a year since the deaths of both my father and my only Uncle. Under the circumstances I cannot imagine a better 'nod' towards both greatly missed men, and I expect my grandfather, (in Mormon heaven?) from whom I suppose I received the newspaper reading gene, would also be impressed.

What was The Dancing Man of Sydney?

The dancing man of Sydney is an Australian Icon. A young man dancing through the city streets of Sydney crowded with other VJ day revellers. It is possibly the major Australian symbol of VJ day, the day that the end of WW2 was announced. It's few moments of newsreel footage captures the mood of the moment, showing Sydney's streets awash with unrestrained and spontaneous celebration.

Australian society then was still very conservative and restrained about showing emotion, so it was a real stand out to see people reacting as they did on VJ day. Try to bear in mind that people of my father's age had grown up during the depression and their childhood effectively ended in 1939 as war in Europe was announced over the wireless. VJ day was the start of Peace and Hope.

Where did the idea for the letter come from?

Each work day I travel between Campsie and Bankstown train stations. Given the usual delays, most days I spend half an hour waiting for a train and opposite the platform is a funeral director's billboard. It gives the company's name and contact details, but most of the billboard is taken up with a picture of a mature woman dancing captioned with 'she loved to dance'. Over time this message has got under my skin. It reminds me that the message to take forward about my father's life is that he enjoyed life, not to dwell any longer on 'loss'. The point of the SMH letter is to remind my niece Janene and all the others who encountered father in only the latter years of his life that my father was once as young and vital as the dancing man continues to be.

A Photocopy of the published Dancing man letter, Page 12, December 10, 2004 Sydney Morning Herald

Were-basenji Original Artwork

At Conflux I did a pair of Victorian fans a small favour and I while I was preparing TBS&E number 9 I was very surprised to receive at my PO box the artwork that forms the Front cover of this issue.

In David Russell's own words;

'The lamp post, woman of negotiable virtue and moon were all drawn in May. All that I lacked was a basenji reference to draw the Were Basenji's head. Time passed, then some more. Finally I found an

encyclopaedia of dogs and finished the enclosed cartoon. I'm sorry that the tongue hanging out of the Were Basenji's mouth makes it slightly resemble a rat, but this can't be helped and it was not the artist's intent...'
David L. Russell December 2004

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Gray pages - ANZAPA

Cover – Artwork by David L. Russell
 Inside Cover – Sydney's Dancing Man – SMH cover
 Page 1, Index, Editorial and Late News
 Page 2, Strange Encounters and Intoxications on the Bankstown line on Melbourne Cup day
 Page 3, All the colours of Water, explanation of the photograph from TBS & E No. 7 and listing 13 points about rain water collecting and water use reduction as used at 1 Eulabah Avenue during 2003 / 04
 Pages 4 and 5, Garry goes to a Water Wise Workshop and gets a free Lunch – October 99, 2004
 Pages 5 and 6, Remembrance Day ceremony 2004, on November 6 at the Bardwell Park RSL Club Cenotaph

Blue pages – Science/Astronomy

Page 7, Notes from the Nov. 17 committee meeting of the Sydney City Skywatchers and my September to November sky observations report
 Pages 8 and 9, The Australian Museum Society meeting of 18 November 2004, Topic: Poisons & Poisoners, Peter MacInnis' talking about his most recent book the 'The Killer Beans of Calabar' (to be reviewed)

Green pages - Political

Pages 9 and 10, Skeptical Politics – Mini Report

Yellow pages – Science Fictional

Pages 10 to 12, September Futurian meeting notes - **Matter Transmission stories, Faults and Effects**
 Page 12, Notes ahead of the October Infinitas meeting - **Who from SF&F would you like to see 'In Charge'**
 Page 12, Books read October to December 2004
 Pages 13 and 14, Brief reviews of books read
 Pages 14 and 15, Notes ahead of the Sydney Futurian meeting for November – **Racism & Xenophobia in SF**
 Page 16, Seasonal free to air SF & Sci-Fi TV reviewed

Final Gray page

Page 17, Garry and the Dancing man of Sydney and notes on David L. Russell's cover artwork.
 Page 18, Repeat of this Index and space for notes

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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