

Two Basenjjs, Sermons and Enlightenment Issue No. 27

The Getting to Know Amber issue

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Editorial

Well I guess you were expecting to see a whole lot of Mailing comments from me about now well nope that just isn't going to happen this mailing. Instead what you get is a slice of some of my most recent preoccupations.

My major preoccupation at the moment is however ANZAPA oriented, I'm re-organising the Yellow Pages, accounts of SF meetings with a view to assembling three files for each of the years 2003 to 2008. The three files are Futurian **Meetings**, **Infinitas Meetings** and **Sydney SF Chronicle**. The first two will contain just the topic discussions and the third one will consist of all the 'News' contributions and my notes on the Non Futurian / Infinitas SF&F events I have covered. When completed

these files will be the source of much content on the Sydney Futurian / Freecon websites that have been erected for me by Sydney SF fan (and Freecon Member) Donna Corbin. I have also been working my Book reviews into an A to Z by Author file. At the moment I have two such files, books reviewed before and after 2005? Each seems to be about 60 pages long and I am guessing that there might be towards 200 books reviewed in total. More on this later.

The Major part of this issue inevitably about Amber. She's just a dog? Well no, as I had anticipated her arrival has altered the whole household dynamic at Eulabah Avenue for the better. You might be able to get some sense of this from '**Getting to know Amber**'. Even if you do not, this account will fill you in on a character that you will inevitably encounter for the next ten or so years of my ANZAPA contributions and other writings. Some version of this may end up circulating among the wider Basenjjs phile community.

The 1984 Survey – I would greatly appreciate it if you could complete and return one of the loose copies of the 1984 survey that are included with this issue. If you like, you might care to copy up the 'spare' copy and pass it out among SF fans (or Non-SF fans) of your acquaintance. 1984 was written in 1948 but was published in 1949, so this year and next year are equally 50th Anniversary years for this book and George Orwell. Send the completed survey forms back to me direct, or via Bruce with your next sub if you are not in Australia. I do want to see if there is a contrast between us SF fans and the 'Literary' attendees of the 1984 relay read, so I'll probably be accepting surveys this year and next. It seems a harmless pre-occupation and it might be illuminating to see how the 'Fannish but not SF fannish' Literary view of what Science Fiction is compared to our view? The difference may be telling?

The next Issue will cover a large number of Sydney SF meetings, I have a number 'in the can' at present, but an equal number needing to be written up and next week, the first week in June there are another three meetings that I really should make the effort to attend (and take notes on). The event listed as a Yellow page event this issue is therefore out of sequence, but it seemed to be a good fit with Getting to know Amber.

See you all again in two months or so.

Garry P Dalrymple.

Getting to know Amber, or our first ten days with a 'new' Basenjis

By Garry P Dalrymple

Being an account of the first ten days of Forever Amber's life and times at number one Eulabah Avenue, the noted retirement home for well to do Basenjis.

By curious coincidence (is there any other type?) I have just learned though a recently received 'e-magazine' called Steam Engine Time Number 8, (Edited by **Bruce Gillespie** and **Jan Stinson**) that **Kathleen Winsor's** book Forever Amber was banned and a prohibited import in Australia between 1944 and 1958. A Basenjis named after a banned book? How quaint! Does she sleep in a crate tonight or should I lay her to rest each night on a bookshelf?

Ben, Debbie, Dom, Mysti and now Amber, Amber is now my fifth Basenjis. In the days before Amber was delivered, while searching among our dog record files Mother found and handed me an exercise book that had several pages recording a hand written account of our first ten days with Mysti. This period must have overlapped one of my parent's then monthly camping weekends as it included text by both mother and I.

I had intended to write something down about Amber's initial time with us, as there is very little objective reportage on record about the transition of mature Basenjis ownership other than in a rescue / recovery theme, so here's my account of Amber's first ten days. I'm going to make a point of not reading through the earlier account so as not to contaminate the present account with any conscious or unconscious reflection on the previous account, although I do plan to type it up later and it will probably appear as a companion piece to this.

Day 1 - Saturday May 17

After lengthy but necessary negotiation, Alan Hunt arrived late in the afternoon to deliver Amber. Much tidying up this morning, as mother and I had to clear out the larger, 'spare', dog crate that will be Amber's sleeping place. Alan gave me a bottle of Thyroxine pills and also presented me with a copy of 'The Basenji Revelation', a book whose existence I had pointed out to him during the email exchanges about setting up today's events. Alan had ordered himself one copy off the internet twice and so had a copy to spare!

First impressions - Visibly, in the crate in Alan's car, Amber seemed a bit agitated. She is used to travelling crated, but not without company. We went inside to talk, mostly about Mysti as a breeder retains some interest in an 'old girl', and Mysti does present very well for her age. The good condition of her feet and few other dog judging points were noted, Alan and Carolyn are both dog breeders and judges.

The first meeting - First meetings are important, we decided that the small Park across the street would be neutral enough a venue for a first nose to nose, nose to tail encounter. I was surprised that it was Mysti, a perpetual shrinking violet, who took the initiative and that it was Amber who was stripe up anxious. Their first close approach was Guarded but went well, teeth shown when Mysti went to sniff Amber's tail and not before. We walked the two of them up the street, tolerance but not affection was displayed between them, better than teeth and snarls.

Both dogs were then conducted through the house without undue incident. In the back yard Mysti was stand offish off to one side while Amber was busy 'marking' and exploring. Mysti was evading, Amber was not pursuing. Again no sparks, teeth barred or growls. I had expected Mysti to go and hide, but she was stand offish but keeping an eye on Amber as she moved about the place. Amber accepted biscuits from Mother and I. She takes and eats our food, doesn't destroy our house and furnishings, craps on our back lawn - It looks like she can live with us.

An unanticipated complication - The question of feeding 'culture' was going to be one of adjustment for Amber. Mysti eats what she wants, when she wants from a bowl that is available to her at all hours (except when she is crated for the night). At Alan's place Amber's run partner has been her father. As a result any of her food not eaten up in double quick time has been cleared up by her father. Unsurprising, but an unanticipated complication to the future relationship between her and Mysti as who eats what when will have to be resolved. When Amber discovered the food dish she hoovered it all up and after a refilling of the dish, cleared it again. She just is not used to perpetually available food, but she will have to get used to it.

Repose? - Down the road at Campsie they were setting off fireworks for the (Korean) food festival, it was pleasing to see that neither Mysti or Amber were much bothered by the noise of the continuous volley fire of fireworks, or the occasional low and loud aircraft noises. For most of tonight Mysti is in her 'cave', her usual preferred indoors resting spot, a triangular gap between two lounge chairs, Amber sits beside me and behind Mum. The only sparks that occurred tonight were when Amber sticks her head into Mysti's cave, minor and short lived, retreat to previous positions and dozing sleep.

Unleashed? - At about 8 pm I tried to put the greyhound collar and leash onto Amber with a view to walking her for a bit so Mysti could eat some food in peace. The other justification was to get her used to walking with me in advance of walking with me and Mysti. Amber made it very clear that she was unwilling (at this time) for me to place hands on her neck. This didn't surprise me that much, as she has only been with us for a few hours. A change in plans needed, so I took Mysti for a walk without Amber, after locking her in the sunroom for 15 minutes alone with a bowl of Chinese noodles. A 35 minute walk for Mysti, leaving Mum and Amber together without incident. On my return I noticed that Amber had not touched the noodles, possibly an unfamiliar food to her, if so, good, as Mysti may have these to herself to eat in peace over the next few days until Amber becomes less Hoovermatic about food.

Office Hours and Watch dogs - As both Mysti and Amber came from the same stud and domestic regime they frequently operate as 'office hours' dogs rather than have activity synchronous to human activity, i.e. they are up in the morning and out into the sunshine and then come sunset, office hours over, they tend to find a spot to put their heads down and sleep, while humans go about making and eating the evening meal and watching TV (or writing about their Basenjis) until much later.

Basenjis make good watch dogs. Some sort of a joke? No. What I mean by this is that before sitting down most Basenjis will do a few turns, an evolutionary relic from a need to flatten long grass to form a sitting down nest. Amber does this quite a bit. It is a bit odd to see her trying to do these moves while standing in the confines of a narrow-ish beer crate!

Bed time - Not wanting to leave too much to chance I put Mysti to bed first, jacketed and carried to her sleeping crate. As tonight will be cold ~12 degrees at 11 pm I had hoped to jacket Amber as well, but after the Greyhound collar incident I decided that that was getting ahead of things for a first day. It took a couple of tries, but eventually Amber climbed into her cage, in pursuit of the traditional goodnight biscuits.

After - I spent some time after putting them to bed adding ground up oats to the rather wet mince meat I have for Amber's morning and evening Thyroxine pills. Given the wetness of it I'm tempted to opt for human grade mince (fit for man or beast) rather than having to duplicate Freezer / fridge space. Rather more than this occurred during this afternoon / night, but this will have to suffice for now. Mother will let them out tomorrow morning, Mysti first, freedom of the backyard and the morning sunshine together until I get up at ~9 AM ish. Finished off reading from The Basenjis Revelation and writing these notes at ~2 am.

Day 2 - Sunday May 18

Morning - I let Mysti and Amber out of their crates at about 8.40, and in that order. I wanted Mysti to out and clear of her crate before I set Amber loose for the day. Both

crates were unsoiled this morning so they each must have had an uneventful sleep. I gave Amber her morning pill in a meat ball and set up a bowl of Supercoat out on the concrete. After the usual necessary toilet breaks Amber got stuck into this, but significantly she did not empty it entirely, evidence of a change of heart from yesterday?

Amber has become quite a 'behind your knees' dog this morning. You go to do something in the house or backyard and having seen Amber in another room or part of the back yard you suddenly feel the faint brush of breath/whiskers at the back of your legs and there Amber is. Basenjis SOP, something we were quite used to with all the other basenjies but for keeping an eye on you from across the room Mysti. Have nearly stepped back on amber twice today.

The Beer Crate - In years and Basenjies past, when we discovered that Basenjies will sit on anything, in preference to the ground or grass we still have about the place one or two plastic beer crates. A relic of my late father's occasionally explosive home brewing experiments these are a plastic tray with a 100 mm side, they are intended to hold a two or three dozen 750 ml beer bottles, but with a hessian sack folded up a few times they are also just about perfect for a single adult Basenjis to curl up in (or at times two sitting up!). I found one in the Garage and it looks like becoming Amber's portable day bed.

This afternoon - Some snarls and snaps as Mother and I retired for our after lunch snooze Amber and Mysti jockeyed for positions outside our bedroom doors. The point of contention seems to be that the space outside my bedroom/the bathroom/hallway to mum's bedroom is a choke point and M passing A provokes a flair-up. Alarming but not serious, as I think this is part of the process of settling out who is to be 'top dog', my money would be on Amber. Consequently we will not shut them out of the house during human nap time, better to let them settle their differences.

At about 6.30 pm Alan phoned up wanting to know how we were going. Amber's lack of enthusiasm for the collar and lead disappoints him, but is within our range of expectations. With Mysti around, Amber is under more stress than if she was entering a new dog free household. We also talked about the book,

The Basenjies Revelation, ever been bitten by a Basenjis on the heel? Ever put a Basenjis in a crib? My Basenjies love bites have always been to ankle and wrists, encouragement to come and play, as Basenjies do to other Basenjies when inviting play. Methinks that Mr Cleveland's contact with Basenjies is only at third hand at best.

Tonight Amber is happy to nest in the beer crate, even when we move it from the doorway connecting Dining room to Lounge room to a spot to one side of the TV so that the main doorway into the lounge room is clear of snarl and snap provoking confrontations. Mostly tonight Mysti is comfortable in her cave although she does venture out a few times and on one occasion Amber looks in on her but is warned off.

Today I have noticed that Mysti is slightly more companionable than before Amber's arrival. Also she is up and about much more, mostly keeping an eye on Amber and keeping out of her way. This might be a good thing exercise wise. I will try to slip Mysti additional food in the absence of Amber, i. e. tonight I will give Mysti two full biscuits and Amber two half biscuits as their respective good night and into your crates gift.

I gave her a fish rissole while Amber was two rooms and a closed door away. To eat this she still had to take it from the bowl to a carpet mat, rather than being secure enough to eat it out of the bowl. Amber has practically paved the backyard today, with four or five 'bombs' to be collected, to Mysti's one or two.

Proof of the adage that if you feed a dog then you had better be prepared to clean up after it and the computer speak term GIGO. And so to bed.

Day 3 - Monday May 19

Mother released them this morning, Mysti heads inside, sounds of snarls and snaps from the hall way door as Mysti adopts her traditional hallway watching spot while Amber roves freely between house and yard with early morning curiosity. The food I set out last night for Amber or Mysti to encounter on release has been partly eaten, but much remains. I do top up the indoor dish with Supercoat as this has been picked out by one or both. At one point I pick Amber up, no snarls, but slight body stiffness and an

unwillingness to meet my eyes. Marked improvement on willingness to be touched from first night. I will try to leash and walk her tonight, but I will pick her up and hold her off the ground before doing so as I have found that feet off the ground calms angry Basenjis noises. As planned, I am off work today although I would have no hesitation in leaving Mum and the two dogs together. This evening I noticed that it is Mysti who is going over to Amber, to be warned off by Amber with growls and stripe up. Mysti is the one to retreat, but she is the one making the overtures tonight. The threat or the example of Amber's behaviour is making her more companionable?

My First Solo walk with Amber - A new partner for the Basenjis Pirouette?

I took Amber for a 50 minute walk tonight for a first time. I had been able to pick her up and carry her around several times today without much back stiffening. Putting a greyhound collar and lead on her was achieved at about 8 pm with little drama. It seems that the looming over her was more of a problem than the collar itself. Amber is light on the lead, and as I lead her out of Eulabah Avenue she is hyper alert to smells and noises. It soon became apparent that she really does not like traffic noises, even the reduced late night form. She would prefer to walk away from them that towards them. We encountered two other dogs tonight, one across the road and one at lead's length. The first she observed alertly until it and it's people moved away, the second she stood at lead's length away from with head turned away. Several times we did the Basenjis pirouette, the manoeuvre necessary to straighten the dog lead after the Basenjis has done the leg entangling across you, behind you and then up in front of you move. It's either this or hold the lead up over your head so that you can pass the lead around your body. Mysti was allowed to snack without interference while Amber was off site.

Day 4 - Tuesday May 20

Morning routines fairly well established by now, mother can handle both fairly well as they separate on emergence from their respective sleeping crates. We weighed both A and M today, to provide baselines for monitoring future health and condition. On fairly inaccurate bathroom scales Amber weigh in at just over 11

kg (11.3?) and Mysti weighed in at just under 11 kg (10.8?). From general appearance I would have expected Amber to out weigh Mysti by more than this.

I went out to a Sydney Writer's Festival at Blacktown public Library. The importance of this is that I left the house at 5 pm and returned home at 10 pm, so mother would be alone with A & M during the time that they would be physically closest and potentially in conflict. Amber watched me go from the back gate, Mysti didn't. Some of the time on the train I spent reading The Basenjis Revelation. Reading this book doesn't come easy, very few Basenjis 'insights' to date and fewer of them ring true. On the way home I did some shopping, mostly for A & M's requisites. Mother reports a quiet night with each resting in their preferred corner.

Day 5 - Wednesday May 21

My Last day at home / off work, en effect a five day weekend with not much more than this account to show for it?. There are far worse ways of spending time off work than by spending quality time with parent and getting to know a new pet. We had a call from Alan around lunchtime. All fine to report. We will have to coordinate A and M's medicals, i. e. Heartworm and C5 injections / immunisations etc. but this will await receiving some need documentation from Alan. This afternoon Amber spent some time camped just within my bedroom door. Mysti spent the time in her 'cave' with a clear line of sight to Mother through her open bedroom door. It might be that Amber has decided to become more attached to me than to mother as I am more like Alan in appearance, or it could be that this afternoon lying down and reading the paper after lunch I was just more active than Mother.

Walking with Amber and Mystique -

Tonight I took A and M for their first ever walk together, nearly 90 minutes to the RSL Club and then once around Hughes Park Oval. Lots of lead juggling and Basenjis pirouetting for me. The girls were not too interested in the ladies practicing for soccer. During this walk lounge room animosities and closeness warnings seem to be have been suspended, possibly over whelmed by the stimuli of new noises and smells. An the leash they have

both investigated the same smell source nose to nose without growls, although their preference is for Amber to walk at my knee and for Mysti to walk further away, preferably on the other side of me and Amber. I'm inclined to think that they could get by walking with leads knotted together, SOP when walking Ben and Debbie in previous years. Amber would be the 'lead' dog and Mysti the follower, you put in the lead the dog most likely to sink it's teeth into the rear of the other dog rather than for 'leadership' reasons. The lead would be knotted about 1 metre from the collar, i. e. so they could turn / pass each other without tail to teeth encounter.

Amber is scratching up a lot, she does seem to have picked up some fleas, presumably Mysti's cast offs, a form of togetherness and sharing between A & M that we can do without. Amber really isn't used to dealing with 'passengers', so this evening I give each dog a Flea collar and a Capstan anti Flea tablet (in soft cheese). Tonight, after the walk, Mysti seems less inhibited from eating with Amber in the house. After the walk they each retired to their preferred resting spots, Mysti to her cave, Amber to the beer crate. Slight drama at bed time, as an uncovered food bowl at bedtime resulted in some delay in getting Amber to bed. She saw the food on the way out and concluded that it should be cleared before she could go to bed. Chasings round the dining table before I was able to pick her up and carry her to her bed without further protest!

Freedom is ? - To Mysti, she associated Freedom, the Walk and lots of Sniffing opportunities to the appearance of the Greyhound collar and walking lead. Consequently she is not now a bolter through open doors or gates. Instead, she will stand back a bit so as to better see what you are going to do. On the other hand, Amber with her memories of being let out of the run that she shared with her father each morning, she associates an open gate to being let out into Alan's exercise yard for a run, a twinkle and the prospect of food after. Will have to watch Amber when she is near gates that can be opened or left unlocked.

Day 6 - Thursday May 22

Back at work, for the next two days. Up and out at 8.30 am back home 6 pm or later. This

will be the usual order of things for A & M, living with Mum during the day and me as a visitor except at weekends. All calm on the domestic front, Mysti is much more relaxed in the presence of Amber tonight, wandering about and coming out of her cave quite freely. She is beginning to adapt, learning to use the opportunity of Amber not being used to indoor lighting and therefore fairly inactive after 6 pm to get in some food while Amber rests in her beer crate. I find it odd that Amber settles in the beer crate and has no curiosity about Mysti's cave. Just after discussing with mother the lack of vengeance actions, punishment peeing indoors and destruction of clothes or furniture, we discover a mess in the hall way, Amber is believed to be responsible, too much fat free milk or an act of vengeance? Fortunately we chose carpets to match the (future) Basenjis. I picked up Amber to put her to bed and encountered teeth - Ouch! All very apologetic after the event. I recall that when father would play with Ben he would usually end up with bleeding arms, as even playful Basenjis jaws are calibrated to grip Basenjis legs, not thicker human forearms.

Day 7 - Friday May 23

Mum went out today, so A and M were left to their own devices in the backyard, no blood on the grass / concrete so they must be coming to an understanding. Got home from work after 7 pm with Fish and Chips for tea (for me!). A and M seem chained by inertia to their preferred after five resting spots, Beer crate and Cave respectively. Sit down to eat and interestingly only Mysti is interested in playing seagull (diving for chips). A significant difference, looks like Mysti will be taking the night shift to eat without Amber's 'help' and advice.

Day 8 - Saturday May 24

Finished reading TBR late this night/early morning. It doesn't have a lot to recommend it. It is not good enough to praise and it's not bad enough to be interesting. Apparently Mother gave the girls some ring Os tonight without incident, that is food given while they were mutually able to see what the other was getting. More snarls and snaps while I was having an afternoon snooze, apparently the space outside my bedroom is

a most desirable spot at times, but too tight for two? A bit too cold tonight for midnight walkies.

Day 9 - Sunday May 25

This morning mother went to Church, letting 'the girls' into the house as she left. A little bit of whining, Basenjis crying, from just outside my open bedroom door until I get up from bed. I discover that Amber is in my doorway and Mysti is sitting on a wool fleece thing in the corner. I. e. it suggests that the snarls and snaps of previous afternoons were cases of crowding as each dog tried to get in close to my door. Mother returned from Church then went out again to collect the give away thing from this Sunday's paper. Much piteous Basenjis crying from Amber, clearly missing her new 'mummy' and puzzled at her brief re-appearance. Went out myself, to a Sydney Writer's Festival event, a completely Basenjis Free Event! Came home, had a snooze and snarls and snaps as above. It seems that on this occasion Mum was playing Solitaire on the computer and A and M apparently do not care for card games.

Took A and M for their second joint walk -

This time down to the Bexley North Post Office and back. It is down a big hill (40 m above sea level) down to Wolli Creek, up over the Railway station down to the Post Office and then return. About a two kilometre round trip, but the hills seem to make a difference these days. On this occasion I had Amber on a shorter lead and Mysti on the longer. Amber leads most of the time. She is usually a metre ahead and to one side of me with Mysti keeping to my left, usually a metre wide of Amber. It seems to work out. Amber sets the pace but Mysti would prefer to go a bit slower to 'sniff the flowers', but at odd times she was in the lead.

Day 10 - Monday May 26

Here we are at Day Ten already. In Amber we have an at times prickly dog who never the less cries a little when deprived of our company and who is prepared to fight / display aggression to be close to us when we are at home. She seems to be in about two places at once, a whisper of whiskers and breath at the back of your knees, and frequently a pair of eyes looking back at you when you look over your shoulder. As for Mysti, as I had hoped, we have much more of Mysti these days than we had in the

weeks before Amber was delivered. Mysti is much more up and about than formerly and much more inclined to seek out Mother and I than before. A good thing even if this is only to avoid her grand daughter's close supervision. For example. going to work this morning both Amber and Mysti saw me to the screen door, Amber next to Mum and Mysti a metre or so behind. In the past Mysti has not been greatly interested in my comings and goings. A close and playful relationship between the two has not yet eventuated, but they are each adapting to living together. This morning I discovered that Amber has not been eating up the two halves of a dog biscuit that I give her each night as a 'go to bed' reward. Quite surprising given her Hoovermatic attitude to Supercoat at times.

Differences and Similarities between Mysti and Amber

To look at, I prefer Mysti's face. The eyes seem wider apart and larger, an ideal 'pixie wolf' sort of a face. After a few years of familiarity I will probably feel the same about Amber's? Both dogs are ex-breeders from Alan Hunt's Pukkanut stud, 'A Grade' dogs who having reached the end of their breeding career were thought worthy of being re-housing with a family home situation rather than being retained at Pukkanut as a spare bookend. Amber is in fact one of Mysti's many Grand Daughters and as well as this, she has two American stud grandparents, so she is half American? Mysti was born *June* 13, 1993, Amber was born during 2001

Appearance - Mysti has always seemed to be a longer dog and aging has increased this effect, as she currently stands about a hand lower at the shoulder than Amber.

I have noticed that Amber's front legs lean forward, While Mysti's are more vertical. I presume that this is because Amber has more Neck and Head bulk, musculature, compared to the more aged Mysti. Mysti's distinguishing mark is a 'dot' of slightly darker fur on the middle of her tail. Mysti's face is all red fur and seems to be smaller, her eyes standing out as big and cute, while **Amber** has some white on her muzzle, large black spot freckles and some pink skin is visible on her muzzle through the white fur. Her muzzle seems longer. She also has a narrow

white strip between her eyes and on her right side of her neck, in the white collar of fur around her neck, is her most distinguishing mark, a nearly circular 4 cm red spot between her head and body colouration. Amber is a currently a much redder dog than Mysti, although this, like differences in profile / standing gait, may just be the effects of their age differences, I recall that Mysti was quite a red looking dog when we got her.

Character - In temperament there is a slight degree of Mysti's withdrawn personality present in Amber, but not a great deal. She does come forward for a pat and she does 'shadow' mum and I, whoever is up and moving the most. Mysti's idea of keeping an eye on you is to listen at the door or sometimes to sit facing away from you. She is reluctant to make 'aggressive' eye contact for the most part. I have noticed that Amber is completely unaffected by the sound of nearby activity including dogs barking, noises that have made Mysti shivery and fearful. Mysti has always been a bit of a scaredy cat, for example even without the presence of another dog in the house, when she twinkles on the back lawn, she does so while moving, leaving a dotted path of 'bombs' on the lawn to be collected. Amber drops hers more considerately in a single more convenient to pick up pile of steaming by product.

NB - When reference is made to **Supercoat** in this account I am referring to the **Supercoat Lite and Mature** formulation, a lower fat dog food (8% fat) intended for older or less active dogs. I have been getting this in 8 kg bags from nearby supermarkets for about twenty dollars a pop, carrying it home by hand after work on the bus, although, with two dogs to feed now I am considering having an 18 kg bag delivered from a pet food wholesaler. I store this in plastic milk bottles, a three litre milk bottle holds 1500 grams, so I can monitor rates of consumption and so that quantities are easily moveable to avoid vermin depredation.

CONCLUSION

After ten days Mother and I are happy and content to have Amber with us and Mystique is getting used to her as well. From my twenty years of Basenjis ownership, and lately through

long experience with Mysti, Mother and I approached getting Amber with a very different frame of mind and set of expectations from someone buying one or two Basenjis pups. Adjustment is the key word. The integration of Amber into a Domestic situation is a major issue, as is entering a home where there is already a resident dog is another, lastly there is the question of personality. You can't expect puppy flexibility, attachment and adjustment from a mature age dog, and Basenjis as we know (to our cost?) have strongly held views as to their treatment and their conduct.

After ten days Amber has met all of our expectations. Her relationship to her Grandmother still needs some work but in all other aspects we can live with her and she seems content to be living with us.

Additionally, we are seeing much more out of Mysti than we have experienced lately, so that is a plus. We have Amber as a close up dog who fills all available spaces and we have Mysti as a looking on dog who is closer at hand than formerly and filling the spaces where Amber is not. Amber's is an Office hours dog and this is not a disadvantage, her 'head down after five' attitude allows Mysti who is more used to our household's after dark activities to eat and interact with mother and I without Amber's 'supervision' from five pm to late.

I do however detect in Amber some of her Grandmother's stand offishness at times. Amber wants you when she wants you and not the other way around. In fact it seems to be Mysti who is making the approaches and Amber that is doing the rebuffering, although the distance of tolerated proximity seems to be gradually decreasing.

Yellow Pages One Sydney SF Event in May 2008

Sunday May 25, 2008, a day at the 2008 Sydney Writers Festival (SWF)

I headed out to Campsie with plans to take the train in to Circular Quay, visit the 'Zines' Market at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) and then lead on a bus to Paddington for the 1984 thing at the Ariel bookshop. Delays waiting for busses and the train rather tightened my schedule and rain was threatening. **NB** the Campsie Station price for six plain donuts - \$3.50, the Circular Quay Station price for six plain donuts - \$5.20.

On the Train - As another passenger was reading from the SWF program I engaged her in conversation and offered her a 1984 survey to fill out, which she did. Hearing what we were talking about a couple with their baby joined in the conversation. They were surprised that the SWF was on right now. They were interested in seeing **Mem Fox**, children's book writer. I gave them two survey forms to complete and post back.

Outside the MCA - There was a crowd and I thought it might be a festival queue, but as I got closer it turned out to be a busker. Her 'act' is to squeeze into a perspex box. I was not really that impressed, the critical and incompressible human dimensions are the long bones, foot to knee, knee to backside. The woman was about five foot nothing and the box nearly 60 cm a side. Simple maths, all squished up this box could take towards 200 kg of person to fill (216 litres) and the woman was not much over 50 kg. Passing on that experience I noticed a bloke in a two metre perspex box, with attendant video crew and young ladies with clip boards. I was videoed, I offered that this was **Frank Sartor's** vision for squeezing more people into Sydney, affordable perspex boxes for all as a solution to the mortgage crisis. They told me that this bloke was the 'before' for a new TV make over series, he looked a bit rough, so I told them that he was actually a youngish Labour party hack who is being aged by the prospect of seeing his future career prospect dying on the vine with the lemma Government's latest pratfalls. After these contributions the guy directing the cameraman said that he thought I was 'a

natural'. See you on a TV screen sometime soon?

The Zine Market - Didn't quite know what to expect from 'Zines', I know they are several generations removed from what we do for ANZAPA, but I thought it might be worth a look for Freecon Talent. It was a big area, apparently \$8 to have a space for the day, usually two or three people behind each table. It was so tightly packed that at one point I was trapped at the end of a row when two skinny people turned back to back to inquire about some zines that were displayed on tables that were on opposite sides of the aisle. I waved one of the skinny people behind me through, she was able to get through, but only sideways!

I had real difficulty identifying people / zines that would be appropriate recipients of the dozen or so spare copies of TBS&E (no 21 and 26) that I had brought along intending to distribute to people on an ANZAPA wavelength. There were a few people selling self made comic books (as we know them) and one or two self published novels, but very little 'text based' magazines. Most were self expression through art or minimalist text. I presume that most of the text content people these days do blogs if they have something to say rather than making up a hand to hand paper based pamphlet style presentation or use a website to publicise a 'position'. Vale the pamphlet, 1600 to 2000, Caxton would turn in his grave and as for Gutenberg - Mein Gott! The 'Zines' on display are mostly intended to make a visual impact by 'Art' that being printed on paper or cardboard still allows some hand to hand dissemination and Artist control?

The 1984 Relay Reading - I arrived shortly before the advertised 2 pm kick off and, after speaking to the event's visible maximum leaders, placed copies of my 1984 survey on the dozen or so seats set up around a small stage and microphone. I got a few completed responses back (eight before I left) and settled down to watch the 'show'. I had thought that the deal was 'show up, read for five minutes' open to all comers, but it turned out to be a roster of worthies to read 20 minutes each that will go on until the book is

finished. There were about a dozen people seated and hanging around as it started. The crowd was predominantly female, students and over forties etc. Literary Party members? Inner Party Members? There probably would have been more people present, but for the absence of the Thought Police, still no doubt busy cataloguing their haul of 'mucky pictures' from their recent celebrated Oxley9 raid. **Larry Buttrose** explained that last year they 'did' 'Don Quixote' in 41 hour Marathon relay read over several days. The timetable of events for the day, as emailed to me was;_

Larry talked at length on his motivation for the relay read projects, he wants to see more talk about the relevance of 'Good Books' Vs the current emphasis on cleverness in Literary review, commentary on and other Academic mediations between the Writer and the Reader (this is what we Sci-Fi kooks call 'Fandom'). Clearly, heart is in the right place, but is a monumental Relay Read the best bang for a buck process in achieving this? Why not have a part or full day SF con inspired style of conversation About 1984, readers telling what is important to them about 1984, Writers to talk on how it influenced their writing and social / literary pundits to put it all into context?

Via the pernicious influence of the Americans and their 'Mickey Mouse' Laws on protection of deceased writer's intellectual property, 1984 does not come into the public domain in 2009 (fifty years after the death of the Author), it has been kicked back to 2029!

I had to struggle not to take notes on what was being read, I was after all here to cover the event not review the book. In the relatively short time I was there my strongest impression was of the bits read that I did not recall having read thirty years ago. The images of the film are much more strongly represented in my mind these days. Selective memory, or active 'editing out' of memories as part of an unconscious decision to discard memories of the 'unimportant stuff'. A secondary impression was that **Orwell** was not narrating in character, the 'voice' of the narrator was that of a well-to-do Brit of the 1930s rather than a 1980s citizen of Ingsoc's Airstrip One.

The Audience reaction to the readings varied,

most seemed switched off, passively listening in respectful silence, but about half a dozen listeners were more active. They were following the reading in their own copies of the book. There must have been half a dozen printings among these listeners, proof of the continuously in print literary longevity of the book. I suspect that if I had brought along my brick like volume of 'The Collected Works' of George Orwell's writings I would have got 'cred' points. I left after the third reader, handing all of my remaining stock of the survey forms to Larry Buttrose and the Bookshop manager in the hope that additional 1984 buyers / readers might have the opportunity to record their opinions.

Three Science Fictional things I noticed, the bookshop itself is located at **Number 42**, real close by the bookshop you can see 'Verne's Jewellers' i.e. **Jules Verne**, and lastly I found **Nick Stathopoulous** at the bookshop, but I do not think he was there for the 1984 reading relay.

The Ariel bookshop is located in a small Books and Coffee precinct down hill from the East Sydney Tech and UNSW Art School zones of influence, affordable rental space before prices go up the hill to Paddington proper.

I do not think they run to having a SF section, although they do have SFX and Fantasy Art type magazines on display. I presume that '1984' would be on sale in their 'Classics' or 'Literature' section. Across the street was a **Berkelous** branch, bookshop and coffee shop, the Verona and Chauvel cinemas up the road a piece.

Berkelous had ten shelves of new 'SF&F' for sale, but this was equivalent to two or three metres at most of packed shelf space as most books were face rather than spine outwards. Upstairs they had second hand SF&F, about 5 metres of shelf space, a much better range of authors and titles - verdict much less SF than a suburban shopping mall chain bookshop! They had on display a new book by **Jeanette Winterson** 'The Stone Gods' which promised 'What would we do if we found a New World?', clearly, not write a Science Fiction book about how people would react and relate to it!

While trying to get out of town (3.30 to 4.10) by the next available bus, 412 or 423 I noticed that **Angus and Robertson** had a clearance sale on George Street near the 412 bus stop. They were offering 'fill a bag for \$10' possibly 30 books? I tried, but I really couldn't see more than a few books in the heap that I could be bothered to take home. And so to home and the children at 5 pm.

George Orwell's 1984, *Science Fiction or Not?*

A Survey at a 2008 Sydney Writer's Festival event

Larry Buttrose has kindly allowed me to circulate this brief survey on opinions about what is and is not Science Fiction. I would like to invite all audience members and participants in the relay reading of 1984 to take this brief survey and to record their opinions. If you could not attend the Relay reading, you can still participate in the Survey.

Please complete this form and hand it in at the bookshop, or you can post it to:

Garry Dalrymple,
Care of Post Office Box 152,
Bexley North NSW 2207

Survey Questions Starts Here!

1. Were you present at the '1984' relay reading?

(Please circle one response) **Yes**
or **No**

2. Do you feel that '1984' is a Science Fiction story?

(Please circle the response that matches your opinion) **Yes** or **No**

3. Why do you feel that 1984 Is Or Is Not Science Fiction?

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4. **How much of your reading would be Science Fiction?**

(Please circle the appropriate response)
None Very Rarely Occasionally
Frequently Most Almost All

5. My Post Code is

6. My given name is

That's all there is to it. All over, just hand the form to Garry or post it back!

The Who, What, How, Why and When* of this Survey

Hi!

My Name is Garry Dalrymple and I really want to know what people think about Science Fiction today, both SF readers and people who don't read SF.

I'm a member of the **Sydney Futurian meeting**, a group that meets each month to talk about the ideas found in Good, Bad and Indifferent Science Fiction, SF&F, Sci-Fi or Speculative Fiction. We also have a self help program for life long Science Fiction addicts (SFA).

While there is no cure for SFA, at Sydney Futurian meetings we can at least talk about living with SFA!

As a member of **ANZAPA**, an Amateur Press Association (APA) for Australian, US, UK, NZ and Canadian SF fans, I also publish a newsletter called **TBS&E**. For TBS&E I write about most of the Sydney (book) SF&F events that I get to each month.

Results from this survey and my notes on other SF&F events of the SWF will probably appear in the July / August issue of TBS&E. I also issue by email a page long monthly listing of all the Sydney Book interest meetings (SF and Mainstream) and club events I can identify.

The 2008 Sydney Freecon - If you are slightly '**SF curious**' or if you know someone who is, then going to the annual Sydney Freecon might be for you. It's Sydney's only **Free Entry** (by registration) SF&F event where you can meet local SF&F writers and talk about SF&F - but most importantly it's a

chance to meet people who read what you read / watch what you watch.

*There is even a **Short SF Story writing competition** with cash prizes.*

The next Sydney Freecon will be on November 8 and 9, 2008, level 3, 280 Pitt Street Sydney. This event is sponsored and made possible by the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts. Registering in advance is highly recommended!

If any of the above interests you, then feel free to get in touch with me or to look up a few websites about the Futurians or the Freecon. Two websites are;

The Sydney Futurian Website -

www.sydneymfuturian.org

The Freecon Site
<http://www.freecon2008.sydneymfuturian.org/>

Garry's Email;
garry_dal@yahoo.com.au

Postal - The Sydney Futurians / 2008 Sydney Freecon, Care of Post Office Box 152, Bexley North NSW 2207

- The above is a borrowing of some of **Rudyard Kipling's** reliable men.

FINAL REMINDER AND LAST MINUTE PROGRAMME CHANGES:
Marathon reading 1984 @ the Sydney Writer's Festival

Event: Marathon cover-to-cover reading of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.
Date and time: Sunday 25 May from 2pm onwards. Place: Ariel Booksellers, 42 Oxford Street, Paddington. For extra information call Ariel Booksellers on 93324581.

It is a time of secret prisons and torture, of ceaseless distant wars and violent nationalism, of electronic surveillance on every street corner and Big Brother on screens everywhere...

The year is 2008 - or is it 1984?

The programme will include:

2 pm: Welcome by event organiser Larry Buttrose

2.15 pm: First reader, Julianne Schultz, editor Griffith Review, followed by Penguin Books chief Robert Sessions.

6 pm: 1984 Victory Gin cocktails will be served - top secret recipe known only to BB (cocktail inventor Bella Buttrose).

6.15 pm: Presentation of a paper about the novel and George Orwell by Peter Marks of the English Department at Sydney University, followed by Q&A with audience.

6.45 pm: Two Minute Love, Not to be missed special performance by Stephen Measday a la card shuffle of *Subterranean Homsick Blues*.

9 pm: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Quiz, hosted by ABC 702 s favourite quizmaster, Mark Trevorrow, aka Bob Downe.

Don't miss it! (And bring a cushion or fold-up chair!)

Book Reviews

ISBN 978-1-4116-1250-1

The Basenji Revelation,
by Simon Cleveland (US /
Bulg) 172 pages, © 2004,

An irresistible title to those of us who are captivated by the enduring mystery of the Basenjjs, why we are so fascinated with the little

dog from deepest Africa. This book offers the promise of Egypt and Africa in one thrilling story?

If you pick up this book hoping for fresh Basenjjs insights then you will be disappointed, there are none that I could detect. The colour of the Basenjjs in question is never disclosed and apparently it lives in a cage (or a crib?) in the owner's bathroom. To the book's main characters the nameless Basenjjs has about as much substance as a neighbour's imaginary friend.

If you pick up this book hoping for a ripping read, a mystery of rare horror then you will also be disappointed. This book is not so good, it was a labour to read and review.

The story is – bloke gets a special delivery, his Archaeologist Mum has sent him a bush dog from darkest Gabon in Africa by parcel post Quarantine and immunisations apparently not necessary! Immediately after this the news arrives that his mum is dead, freak accident in the field etc. These and other probability straining coincidences abound as required. The Bloke's personality changes (for the worse), he becomes a man possessed by – Anti-vegetarianism. His marriage and job go down hill. His wife surreptitiously seeks psychiatric advice, the Psychiatrist's best mate is also an Africa based Archaeologist, a rival of the Main character's Mum! This guy literally fell into a tomb and came up with 'evidence' that trashes accepted Egyptian Mythology. Not only substituting new characters for the central Good Vs Evil conflict at the centre of the Egyptian pantheon, but it 'really happened' and the conflict continues with nearly infinite re-matches to the present day. On the basis of one partial translation, the Author claims that Anubis universally accepted as the Jackal headed God of the underworld is actually a Basenjjs headed deity! You might be able to see where this is headed, Basenjjs headed or not, Basenjjs headed God, Basenjjs as incarnate vessel of the god, Eternal conflict, Conflict over a man's Body and Soul yadda yadda yadda.

The final scenes of the book involve an 'untraceable' corporate hit man with an

unconvincing cod psychiatry split personality (suburban builder by day, text message activated psychopathic instrument of god's vengeance by night and no one the wiser. Show down time, with time out for animal possession, nudity and cannibalism, then mass murder and then suicide of most characters.

All rather pointless really. The final chapter, has the dog as a sole survivor to the slaughter biting a policeman, possibly to re-set the possession agenda. The Basenjji is clubbed and shot to death, last moments and thoughts described and this reader felt much the same after finishing the book.

This book seems poorly written, as though it is a poor translation of an other language original. Some of the idioms used and the character's inner dialog just do not scan. I soon got tired of spotting the multiple spell checker 'Editing' mistakes, 'Scull' for 'Skull', 'Bear' for 'Bare' etc. and many others. There were also several cringe worthy passages worthy of quotation in a **Thog's Master class** listing in Dave Langford's Ansible.

Overall this is not a book that is good enough to recommend and it is not a sufficiently bad book to be 'interesting'. The only Revelation contained within this book is that the writer seems not to have ever met or understood a live Basenjji, and has only a glancing understanding of the internet avatar of the breed, but I think that the Egyptologist could claim first punch out rights well ahead of us Basenjji lovers. Over recent years Africa has to endure endless humiliations, AIDS, the Civil War in Sierra Leone, Robert Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe and now as a final insult The Basenji Revelation, by Simon Cleveland.

On page 84 of The Basenji Revelation appears the following story which I quote in full. 'One account of particular interest belonged to the Kono tribe of Sierra Leone. According to their oral tradition, in the beginning existed the first man, the first woman and their baby boy. The Supreme Being revealed that none of them would die. Instead as they aged, they would have new skin for their bodies. The Supreme Being put these new skins in a bundle and entrusted it with a dog to take to the man. The dog went off with the bundle, but on the way met other animals and joined them in a feast.

During the feast the dog shared the secret of the skins he carried, and when the snake overheard it, stole the skins from the dog. Unfortunately, when the dog confessed this to the Supreme Being, it was too late. The snake kept the skins and since then all humans suffered mortality. The snake was punished by being driven away, and the legend dictates any man to find a snake should kill it.'

This is about the closest I could find in the book to a revelation or insight to Basenjji, and as you can see, the dog is really only a minor character in this story about snakes and their skins.

ISBN 020-07983-050,
The Big Jump
by **Leigh Brackett (UK?)**,
128 pages, © 1953.

An example of a 1950s SF magazine derived novel in the then popular 128 page format. There's more fisticuffs than Physics in this story, the main character being a labourer rather than a Scientist. Most of the characters are men who solve problems with their fists, 1940s style. Overall the story is similar to the Runts of Cygnus MMM in that it is a story about an 'Arduous journey there, and you won't like what you find there' space trip, technology of spaceflight is an unexplained incidental to the journey and confrontation of personalities. The Main character, Arch Comyn investigates a report that a sole survivor of a first extra solar space flight, to and back from Barnard's Star and its planets is being held on Mars at a facility owned by the immensely wealthy Cochrane family. He is motivated by concern about a friend, Paul Rogers, who was a crew member on this flight. The single returned survivor turns out to be Ballantyne, the space drive's inventor, who is in a bad way, some sort of radioactive poisoning, who dies but whose body seems 'vitalised' by something encountered on the trip. Before Ballantyne dies he whispers a warning about the 'transuranians' to Comyn, which in the absence of ship's log books makes his knowledge a valuable property, worth being tortured and killed for! The hint

of the presence of stable Transuranic elements and stranded / abandoned crew members encourage the Cochranes to fund a second flight out to Barnards Star.

The Story Climaxes with an encounter with the 'Transuraneans', a nearly ethereal race raised worldly concerns or further material ambitions, as their lives are sustained by the weird energies of the radioactivity of the Transuranic elements. The story concludes that this 'perfection' is not for Man, not yet. I would like to point out that in this 1950s SF novel the 'ineffable' was discovered and turned away from. In a late 1960s or 1970s novel, this 'ineffable' would probably be eagerly embraced, possibly with drugs thrown in as well. In a 1990's novel the same would probably be sought in a Cyberspace setting, upload / download type interface.

ISBN 0-7221-4483-0,
The Stainless Steel Rat
Saves the World
 by **Harry Harrison (US / Irish)**, 153 pages, © 1972.

Time meddling by antagonistic forces threatens the existence of all that the Stainless Steel Rat holds dear, so, all other alternatives dissolving into non-existence, he decides to do the right thing and go back in time to sort these meddlers out, armed with 32,000 AD technology and the cunning of a Stainless Steel Rat. Enjoyable light and amusing SF adventures with a satirical edge as the Stainless Steel Rat encounters 1975 America. Time Machines, Time loops and branching Alternate realities are mentioned and lightly treated as adjuncts to allow the infinitely resourceful main character to perform 'impossible' adventures. Lots of fun! A light touch on satire on the mores of the time, not a great Stainless Steel Rat story, but good enough for a rainy Sunday read.

ISBN 1-86508-182-5
White Time, An Anthology of
 ten stories by **Margo Lanagan (Australian)**,

261 pages, © 2000.

I picked this book up out of curiosity. **Margo Lanagan** is a much lauded Australian SF&F writer, **Clarion West Writer's workshop** graduate and these stories are all her immediately 'post Clarion' stories. All the blurbs on the back, from writers I have enjoyed reading in the past were very positive.. I had also read her much praised 'Singing my Sister Down' (from her Black Juices collection?) and completely failed to understand what other readers were raving about, so I approached these stories with a feeling that I needed to be proven wrong about my previous assessment of the writer. I really want to understand what the big deal about this writer is supposed to be!

In reviewing the stories in this Anthology, the first thing that strikes me on commencing to write this review about a week after finishing this book is that on re-reading the index page I'm surprised to discover that there are ten stories in this anthology. A week on and I only have some vague memories of two or three of these stories (marked with an *), i. e. the rest were just not sufficiently memorable to leave a lasting impression.

* White Time, Time Travel, adventures in Null space and teenage work experience! Interaction in a Null Space pocket with time travelling or transcendental life forms does bad things to your head, apparently. Nice visionary future, not much done with it!

Dedication, A Princess dies in battle (Why?) and her body has to be properly dressed in courtly fashion for reasons of state? Why and Why?

Tell and Kiss, Story bugs, Teenage love? Death by go Kart? Sorry I just didn't understand it.

The Queen's notice, Love and Romance in an Ant colony? A fighting male (what!) gets seconded to the queen's bedroom. Narrative jarring as I don't know any colony Insects that work that way.

* Big Rage, Marital bust up, opens doors to another reality, an SCA reality without any credible economic basis, naturally a choice between two realities, naturally the main character goes for the chain mail alternative to hygiene and security.

The Night Lily, (Alien?) Military occupation, civilian persecution, bombings and round ups

