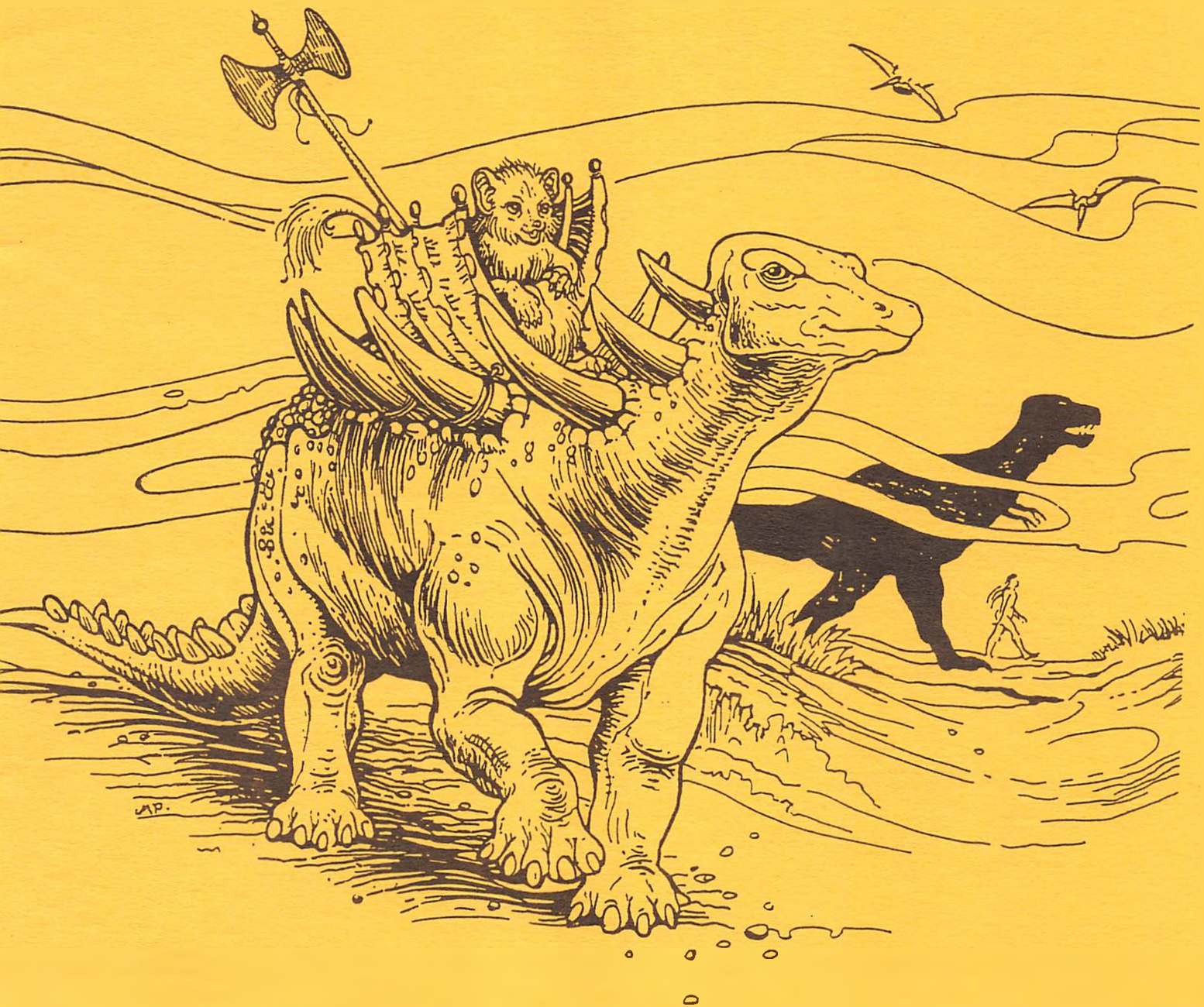


aussiecon three

progress report # 2

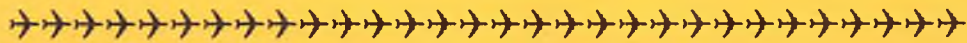
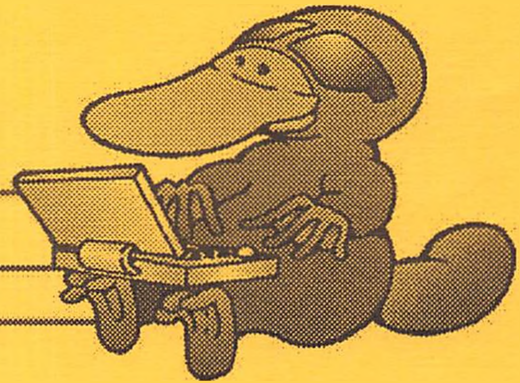


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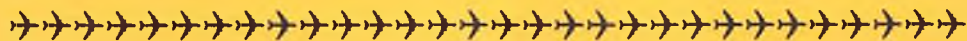
T • H • R • E • E

57th World Science Fiction Convention

2nd - 6th September 1999



Gregory Benford – Bruce Gillespie – George Turner



Progress Report 2

July 1998

Edited by Mark Loney

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Marilyn Pride	Cover	Craig Hilton	Back Cover
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A Message from the Chair

Perry Middlemiss

Welcome to the second progress report for Aussiecon Three. As I write these words we are just a touch over halfway from winning the bid to the day of judgement when the con opens on the 2nd of September 1999.

It's a period of mixed feelings as the organizing committee, on the one hand, wishes they had more time, and, on the other, wishes the whole thing would rush to a conclusion as fast as possible. But it is mainly a time for taking stock of where we are in the planning phase, checking the timelines and "drop-dead" dates, finalizing the appointment of people to the various positions on the committee, and generally asking for lots of advice from people who have gone before.

I believe that, in the main, we are doing quite well. Our membership numbers are about where we thought they would be at this time, local publicity is starting to gather pace for the final year push, and more and more people are coming on board to help out and work on the different areas of the convention. Of course, it is stating the obvious to say that we could always do with more help and we will be making a major push in a number of organizational areas over the next few months.

The advent of the Internet over the past ten years has certainly helped with the organization of events such as a Worldcon. It keeps the far flung divisions of the committee in touch and allows decisions to be made quickly if

need be. It also allows people to ply us with both suggestions and questions about Aussiecon Three.

For example, we have received several queries about convention hotels and the convention airline. I am pleased to say that an announcement about the convention airline should be made shortly after you read this: we are in the final stages of negotiation with a major international carrier and expect to formally announce our official airline by August.

As for hotels, we have firm block bookings with two hotels in the immediate area of the convention centre (one under the same roof as the convention centre) and arrangements with others within walking distance. Our Hotel Liaison officer has considerable experience with conventions of a similar size to Aussiecon Three at our convention site. For each of those conventions he has used our appointed accommodation agency with little or no difficulty.

We do not believe that our members will experience any significant problems, either with our accommodation agency or at the convention hotels.

As I mentioned above, supplying information to you via these progress reports involves a lot of lag time and, consequently, some of the information we supply here will be out-of-date almost before you read it.

Aussiecon Three, 2-6 September 1999

To ensure you have the latest version of events, I suggest you visit our home page at www.aussiecon3.worldcon.org. Our webmaster updates the home page on a regular basis. If you wish, you can arrange to be informed by email whenever changes are made.

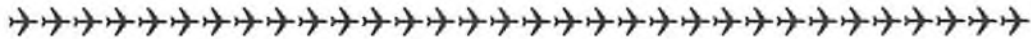
And, of course, you can write to us in either Australia or the United States with any queries that you might have.

As I write, the Australian dollar is falling towards record lows against the US

dollar making it that much easier for non Australians to make decisions about visiting Melbourne for the convention and, hopefully, staying on to see some other parts of Australia. We hope you'll take this unique opportunity to join us in godzone country.

Perry Middlemiss

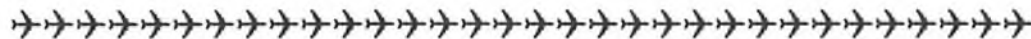
June 1998



Site Selection Ballot for the 1999 Worldcon

Aussiecon Three won the site selection ballot at LACon III, the 1996 Worldcon, on the first round of voting with a majority of 808 votes.

Official Bids:	Mail	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
Australia in '99	260	62	152	334	808
Worldcon in Zagreb 1999	27	13	34	84	158
Write In Locations:					
Alcatraz in '99	0	2	6	11	19
Hawaii	0	0	0	1	1
Holland	0	0	0	1	1
Las Vegas in '99	2	0	0	0	2
Louisville	0	0	0	1	1
Minneapolis in '73	0	1	0	1	2
Reykjavik	1	0	0	0	1
Rottneest Island in '99	0	0	3	0	3
None of the Above	11	3	6	13	33
Total Ballots With Preference	301	81	220	447	1029
Votes needed to win (50%+1)					515
No Preference	18	1	3	13	35
Total Valid Ballots	319	82	203	460	1064
Invalid or Spoiled Ballots					32



TRAINS IN THE DISTANCE

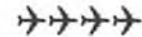
Bruce Gillespie

'Everybody loves the sound of a train in the distance', sings Paul Simon, 'Everybody thinks it's true... The thought that life could be better/Is woven indelibly/Into our hearts/And our brains.'

And it is true, about trains, and life, and hearts, but I didn't know that when I was four years old. In 1952 a train — the one with the electric thingie on top — was our way of getting to the centre of Melbourne. Other trains — the exciting ones that chuffed smoke and snorted steam — played shuttle on the line that was over the road from the front of our house. For hours each night they batted goods wagons at each other along the shunting rails.

And there were other trains that hurled themselves past our house, roaring at me to stay in my safe garden on our side of the road. These workhorses of the Victorian Railways were headed for a mysterious region called 'Gippsland'. Such an engine would drag behind it a long line of goods wagons that sometimes took five or ten minutes to pass our house.

No wonder I wanted to be an engine driver when I grew up. Trains were all-powerful. They went very fast on long journeys. They played mysterious Brobdignagian games just over the road and beyond a slight fence. From the parapet of the verandah at the front of our house I could watch their endless antics. And one day I might even have my own set to play with.



In every childhood there is a day that is so magical or terrifying or ambiguous that forever after you wonder whether or not you lived it; perhaps it was your first very vivid childhood dream. For years I had such a memory, a dream feeling. I remembered that my father opened the door of the front lounge-room, a door that was almost never opened to anyone, let alone to children, and let me glimpse an entire model-railway set laid out on the floor. Lines made a circle on the carpet. A bridge crossed it; a railway station was there beside it. My father picked up the railway engine, wound a key, and let the little green object scoot around the circle until it jumped the rails and clattered towards the wall. My father attached carriages to the engine. This slowed it, and the whole regalia trundled off demurely around the circle.

This went on for some time. It seemed that the set had two engines, a little green one and a black one, both driven by clockwork, and lots of carriages. We tried out all the possibilities. Various combinations of carriages circled the track. I wound up the engines until the clockwork broke on one of them.

That was that. I wasn't old enough for the train set yet. I was bundled off to bed, and in the morning there was no sign of the miraculous layout. Nor did it show itself again for about four years, which is so long a time in a child's life that I really thought I had dreamed the whole episode.

It's still not clear to me how parents decide that a child is 'old enough' for something. In their endless attempt to get me to do something in life beside reading books, Mum and Dad revealed one day during the particularly long and hot school holidays at the end of 1956 that the model train set really existed. It had been my father's when he was a boy. Dad showed me the Hornby catalogue for the year, sometime in the late 1920s, when he had started the collection. The catalogue was more exciting than the set of model trains. All the engines and carriages shown were based on famous English trains of the early twentieth century, and each of them bore mysterious initials, such as LNER, LMS, and GW. My father explained that these letters showed which English railway company each belonged to. The idea of private ownership of railway lines was new to me, and somehow indecent. No matter. English railway engines and carriages, as shown in the catalogue, looked much prettier than the humble black chuffers and red rattlers that passed our house every day.

I have always been bored by games of any sort. Once you know the rules of any game, there is no more interest in it; you give up such a useless activity and go back to reading books. So what do you do with a model-railway layout? It was very exciting to get everything out of the tin trunk in which the set had been stored for thirty years. It was rather nice putting together the first circular track, and running trains around it. But watching things go around in circles was boring after the first half hour.

To beat the boredom, I connected the straight rails, and put aside the circular rails for when the line went round corners. Off we went, and soon had a track that stretched from the kitchen, through the living room, and into the front passage. This was fun for a while. We could invent place names for destinations, and use blocks and toys as part of the layout. There was one snag: my mother wanted to use the house as well. After she had tripped over unsuspected rails and carriages a few times, she decided that maybe I could go back to reading books.

Not so, for I had glimpsed a new idea: that of 'destination'. Where could we take the railway lines so that they stretched out into the distance, like a real railway line? How could I make their destinations mysterious and variable?

One night I had a dream, one that excites me still. Somehow the Oakleigh railway line curved over Haughton Road, came up the side of our house, made itself small, climbed up through some passage in the floor, went through the living room, out the other side, and eventually rejoined the main railway-line. (Years later I discovered that someone had written a song along similar lines: 'The Railroad Goes Through the Middle of the House'.) It was during the hot days of the January annual school holidays, in that long-gone era when summer began in December and ended in February. The lawn was dry, and there was no danger of sudden showers. Why not set up the whole layout on the back lawn?

The back lawn was a large oblong, with a grassed gutter down the middle. A chunk at one end of the oblong had been

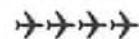
turned back into garden. It looked to me like a map of the United States of America, with the gutter as the Mississippi River, and the chunk as the Gulf of Mexico. My obsession the previous year had been the films, comic books, and stories about Davy Crockett, so by the end of Grade Four I knew everything there was to know about American history and geography.

In 1954, during the visit to Australia of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, my parents had bought an atlas. It was, naturally enough, called *The New Elizabethan World Atlas*. One double-page spread in it showed the USA. I spread out the atlas in front of me. The double-page map was filled with possible destinations, including many that I had never heard mentioned in films or comic books or on the radio. 'Natchez' — what a wonderful name. There was no name in Australia with that kind of sound. Waco, Texas. You could journey towards a place with a name like that. Tampa, Florida: let's head for there.

There was one difficulty: the line could go to Florida, or over to St Louis. Seattle or Los Angeles were quite out of the question unless, of course, you started from there. Nope. New York was always the starting place. We needed new railway lines so that the layout, with the help of points and a bridge across the Mississippi, could cover the continent. From then on my parents and relatives were faced with expensive requests at each birthday and Christmas time: more railway lines! extra carriages! Even at the age of nine I was afflicted with the collecting disease, which merely got worse with age.

The model-railway idyll lasted only three summers. The weather was too damp during the May and September holidays for us to set up the railway layout, and we didn't get many ideal days even during the summer holidays. By the beginning of the summer of 1958-9 the crunch had already come. My parents had decided to move from Haughton Road, ironically because they were increasingly irritated by the noise from the Melbourne-to-Gippsland railway line across the road. We moved to Syndal on 17 February 1959, and I took the lines and engines and carriages out of their tin trunk only once again in my life. Yet, somehow, by summer 1958 — that last, regretful period of six weeks at Oakleigh — I had collected enough lines to cross the American continent, via Saint Louis, and send a branch line to Florida as well. We had extra accessories and lots of extra carriages, but never a bridge that crossed the Mississippi safely. (The carriages always fell off the bridge my father had built to cross the gutter.) The clockwork mechanism had failed in both engines. The rails had already begun to rust.

The whole layout is still with my parents. In its tin trunk it was dragged up to Bacchus Marsh and back to East Preston, up to South Belgrave and down to Rosebud, but it's never been played with again. Maybe it's valuable — perhaps very valuable — to someone. Whatever happens to those model railways, they already have given their special pleasure; not because of what they are, but because of the way they attached themselves to my imagination.



Why did I choose America as the basis of that model railway layout? Why didn't I choose Australia, which has roughly the same shape and size as the USA?

Because there's nothing in the middle of Australia except desert. Only one line, the Transcontinental, crosses the continent. In the middle of Australia there is no Des Moines, Iowa, no Grand Rapids, Michigan, no Wichita, Kansas, where a tired railway passenger can alight for a good night's rest before going on with his journey. When I was nine or ten, Australia did not seem to hold out possibilities; it seemed empty in the middle. I felt the same about Melbourne and its suburbs. You rode through Murrumbeena or Caulfield or Toorak in real and very suburban carriages; they were built merely to carry people; they left nothing to the imagination. The suburbs, your own home turf, were home, parents, relatives, houses and gardens, everyday practicalities, boredom. Could anything ever be better, except over there somewhere in New York or the middle of America?

It was only much later that I found out that Victoria's railway system was not built wholly according to boring ironbound practicalities. The people in charge of Melbourne's most important growth period, from 1870 to 1890, used the suburban rail system as a way of letting their imaginations go. Also, of course, they wanted to line their pockets. They bought undeveloped land way off the edge of the suburban perimeter and then bribed somebody in parliament to run a railway line through it. This procedure often worked. The Melbourne

suburb of Hawthorn, for instance, was built around its railway station.

Victoria's rail system radiates out from Melbourne. During the 1880s country towns, no matter how small, were able to persuade politicians that one railway station could buy lots of votes. Lines spread across wide plains and previously unheard-of rivers and climbed into desolate mountain forests. Most of these lines were never profitable.

Therefore during the 1880s Victoria's rail system became a model railway set that used real engines and carriages. Its imaginative purpose, as opposed to its practical purpose, was to give Victorians the feeling that they could travel safely from anywhere in the colony to anywhere else. And this remained true until the late 1960s, when suddenly the railway system began to make huge losses and politicians began planning ways of shutting it down.

Railway trains are symbols of power, especially when carried along by steam engines. All that prancing and chuffing and speed and prevailing against relentless gravity and distance! But railways are also a symbol of domesticity. If you get on a passenger train, it carries you to the place shown on the destination board. It doesn't crash, except in the most exceptional circumstances. A land filled with railways, like the USA of my atlas, is a settled land. People can move as they like. No wonder Paul Simon feels that the sound of a train in the distance reassures you that life could be better. All you have to do is travel far enough and you reach that better life.

Something like this thought must have occurred to the people who built Melbourne. Suburban houses fill the spaces between railways. Why not, then, build a railway that did not stretch out directly from the city, but instead made a great loop that would link all the radiating railways?

Such a plan was made in the 1880s. It was called the Outer Circle Line, and was the most gloriously silly episode in Melbourne's long history of absurdly disastrous public projects. It would go north from near Hughesdale station (now on the Oakleigh line), and cross three other lines until it arched in from the north at Clifton Hill station (very near where I live now). It would provide jobs and guarantee the growth of suburbia. And it would, although nobody said so at the time, symbolize Melbourne's maternal quality, its desire to give total security to its citizens, enclosed as they would be by railways.

The Outer Circle Line was actually built during the 1890s, but as the last sections were opened, the first sections were about to be closed down. Graeme Davison, in his *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* (Melbourne University Press, 1979), writes that 'The new line was built to the most generous engineering standards with wide double-track cuttings and embankments and closely spaced stations.' However, 'in its first nine months of operation [the Outer Circle Line] attracted only 5153 passengers (most of them joy-riders?)'.

The Outer Circle Line was Melbourne's great model-railway line. Hour after hour, trains would trundle across deserted paddocks and past empty

stations. I see on each of these stations a lonely station master standing forlornly while waiting for the passenger-of-the-week to turn up.

The Outer Circle Line might have succeeded if it had been opened ten years earlier, in 1881 instead of 1891. 1891 was the beginning of Australia's worst depression, an event that stopped Melbourne's growth for nearly thirty years and ensured Sydney's win in the battle between the cities. Davison records that entire new suburbs, built during the boom of the 1880s, lay empty, their homeowners forced to give up their houses because nobody had the money to take over their mortgages.

Many of the paddocks beside the Outer Circle Line were filled only during the late 1950s. By that time most of the line had been demolished. It left only odd patterns of streets through the 'garden suburbs' — patterns so irregular and striking that you can still use a street map to trace the old path of the line. I'm told that there are also plenty of remnants of the line — sleepers, rusty steel bits — hidden behind suburban fences or in unexplained little parks.

There will never be another Outer Circle Line, not even among those grandiose schemes that governments announce every few years. At one stage there was going to be a line from Huntingdale Station to Monash University (demolishing how many millions of dollars' worth of factories and houses?), and even six years ago the Cain Government still talked of a line from Frankston to Dandenong. This didn't happen. Instead the government built a freeway covering the same distance.

Cars have made railways very unprofitable in Victoria, and now politicians and bureaucrats seem to spend their nights tossing and turning, trying to think up acceptable ways to kill the railway system. Most people are still as emotionally attached to the suburban railway system as I am, so the government cannot destroy the system at one go. But only 7 per cent of Melbourne's people still travel on the system. Most Melbournites live in one outer suburb and travel to work in another outer suburb. The railways may still radiate from the centre of Melbourne, but Melbournites' lives do not.

If the railways go, the Melbourne I grew up in will have gone. Maybe it has already. When I was a boy, Oakleigh was on the edge of the suburbs. Now Oakleigh feels like an inner suburb, and the sprawl stretches another 40 kilometres to the east. Only a small proportion of Melbourne's people lives within walking distance of a railway station. And if we can no longer hear the sound of a train in the distance, can we still hope that life will be better?

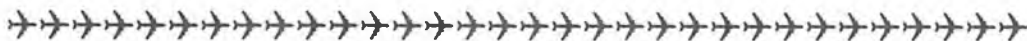
There is only one remedy. One day in the future, when Melbourne lies in ruins because it no longer has its suburban railway system, and when we've won Tattslotto and can afford to retire to a

large, comfortable house set on wide lawns surrounded by hedges, I will take out a rusted tin trunk from where it has been hidden for many years. In it I will find all those railway lines, carriages, engines, and accessories. They will be very rusted by then, perhaps unrecognizable. But if the wheels of the carriages and engines still turn, I will lay out the lines across the lawn.

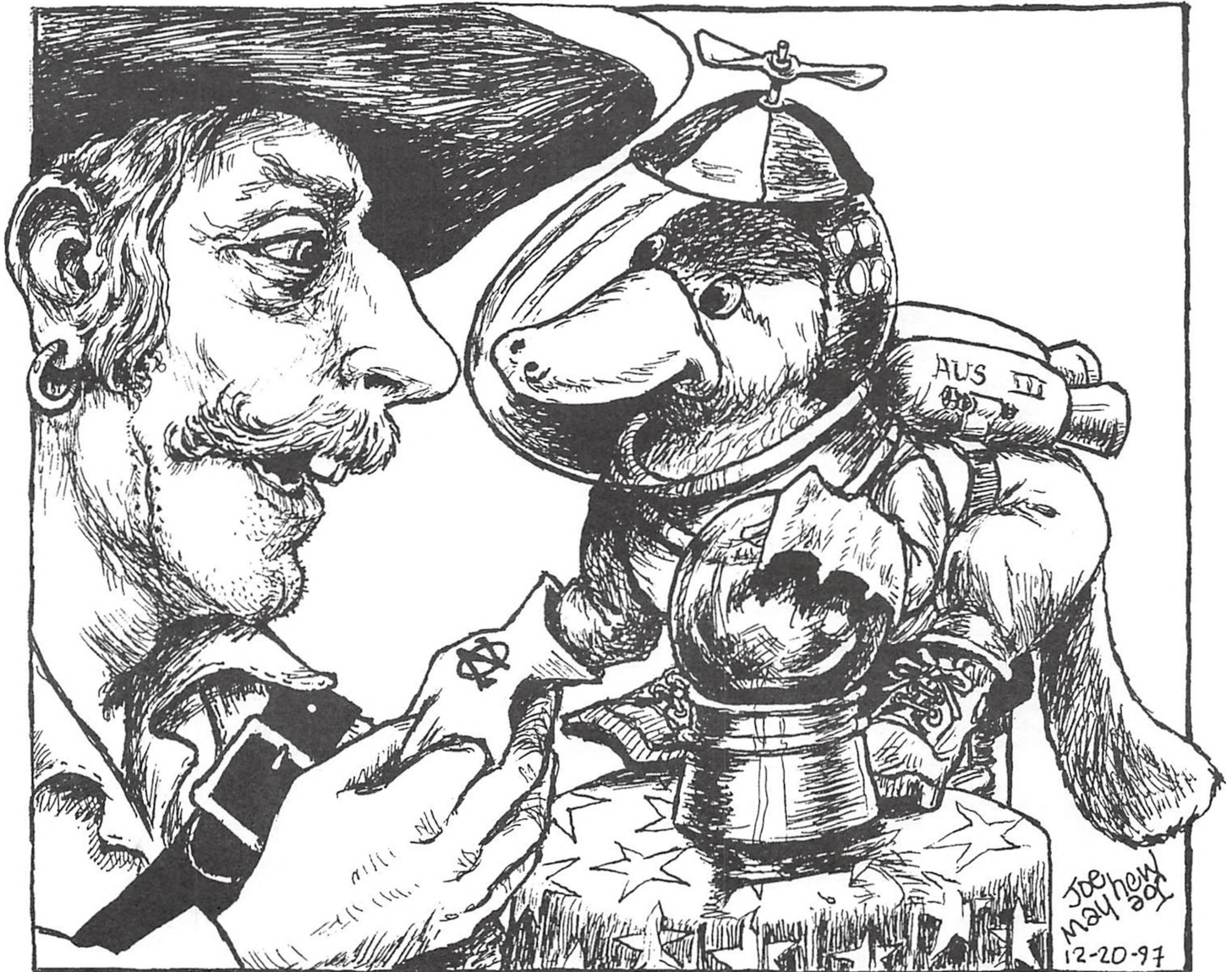
I will not, however, return to the map of America in my old atlas. Instead I will turn to the map on page 156 of Graeme Davison's *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*. I will call the central station of my system Melbourne. Straight lines will stretch out to a station which I will name Hughesdale. Circular lines will veer off to the north. With a combination of straight and circular lines I will bring the trains back to their destination at Clifton Hill, and finally into Melbourne. Hour after hour trains will travel through the long grass. No passenger will ever step on or off that train. But I will know where those carriages are and will keep them all moving.

At last I will recreate the Outer Circle Line. In this way I will create the real Melbourne — the marvellous Melbourne that never quite came into existence — on that lawn in the future.

— Bruce Gillespie



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ONE OF MY MOB

John Bangsund

George Turner was one of the most generous people I have known - generous with his time, which was very precious, as it is to any writer; with his talents, which were prodigious; and with his friendship, which was unqualified. There were very few ifs, buts or maybes about George. His yes was yes; his no, however gently framed, was just as firmly no. You knew where you stood with him. That is, once you began to appreciate what an extraordinary person he was, you knew where you stood with him. There was a certain shyness or reticence about him that for some people hindered this appreciation. I was one of those people. He was a friend of mine long before I knew he was.

I met George in 1967. At the time I was a publisher's sales representative, probably the least effectual ever employed by Cassell and Co. in Australia. I didn't want to be a sales rep, I wanted to be an editor, but Cassell already had an editor -- Bob Sessions -- and it would be some time before they wanted another. As it happened, in 1967 I was an editor, of sorts. I was publishing a fanzine called *Australian Science Fiction Review*, and since I did the typing I felt entitled to call myself editor.

One day Bob Sessions called out to me from his office: 'Do you know that George Turner is one of your mob?' Which mob? I wondered. All I knew about George Turner was that he had shared a Miles Franklin Award with Thea Astley, that Stephen Murray-Smith

had spoken very highly of him in *Overland*, and that Cassell Australia would soon be publishing his sixth novel, *The Lame Dog Man*. Bob was working on the jacket copy for *The Lame Dog Man*, and he showed me what George had written about himself: he was a science fiction addict.

As soon as I could, I arranged to meet George. We had a good talk, and I gave him the first eight or nine issues of *ASFR*, the like of which he had never seen or suspected -- a magazine that discussed science fiction seriously, as literature.

Either then or soon after, I asked George if he would consider writing something for *ASFR*. He did. He wrote an essay called 'The Double Standard'. I had published many adverse reviews in *ASFR*, but nothing quite like this. George had taken one of the most highly regarded novels in the genre, acknowledged that it was an exciting piece of storytelling, then ripped it to shreds as a novel and as science fiction. I was amazed to learn that this was the first book review George had ever written.

He went on writing for *ASFR*, and when it folded, for Bruce Gillespie's *SF Commentary* -- and for many other publications. So that meeting, thirty years ago, accidentally launched George's distinguished career as a critic and eventually writer of science fiction.

[...]

Aussiecon Three, 2-6 September 1999

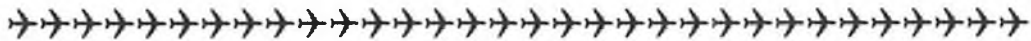
An incident at that first meeting with George gave me some little insight into his sense of humour, which at times was so understated that you were in at least two minds about his meaning. As I rose to leave, he said: 'I suppose you had better meet Caesar' -- and he opened a door, and in burst the biggest dog I had ever been anywhere near. Caesar was a Great Dane -- very young, very skittish, and enormous. Caesar gave me a quick examination. Something about my legs interested him, and before I knew it he had crawled between them. There I was, for an absurd moment, helpless, sort of mounted back-to-front on a gigantic

hound. Then just as suddenly he was in front of me again, and he put his huge paws on my shoulders, and began licking my face. And George said: 'Don't encourage him, John.'

JOHN BANGSUND

**FOUNDING EDITOR,
AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION
REVIEW**

11 JUNE 1997



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Perry Middlemiss

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THE AULD LANG FUND

Marc Ortlieb

In 1975 we colonials needed someone with charm, wit and impeccable fannish and professional credentials to liven up the first Aussiecon. Bob Tucker was chosen, the Tucker Bag was started and enough money was raised to bring Bob to Melbourne. In 1985, we had a similar need and the Shaw Fund raised enough to bring Bob Shaw to Aussiecon Two. Two Bob was a lot in those days, and, in these current inflationary conditions, we can't even afford one Bob. We felt though that we could afford a Dave: to wit, Dave Langford. The Auld Lang Fund aims to bring Dave Langford to Australia for Aussiecon Three in 1999.

Dave Langford is your renaissance fan. Not only does he have impeccable credentials as a scientist, making him a useful foil for Aussiecon Three GoH Greg Benford, but he is a published author, a columnist for such magazines as SFX and Gamesmaster and a fan par excellence with more Fan Hugos than you shake a stick at to prove it.

Dave edits Ansible, the archetypal short but frequent fan newsletter. He also edited one of the best ever genzines Twll

Ddu - Welsh for Black Hole, Justin Ackroyd assures me. We just need to get Dave over here to tell us how to pronounce it.

How do you help get Dave over here? Simple. Donate money. By donating AUD\$20 or UK£10 you get to be a Friend Of Old Langford, which entitles you entry to a FOOLs only party at Aussiecon Three where you will be able to get Dave to autograph a copy of The Silence of The Langford, which is also available to Australian FOOLs from us, courtesy of book importer extraordinaire Justin Ackroyd.

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SF LITE: Star Trek

Greg Benford

The 30th anniversary of Star Trek in September of 1996 left me wry, perplexed and sour. To be an sf fan and see the genre overrun in the public's eye by the astonishing persistence of a television series, routinely launched with little fanfare thirty years ago, calls for explanation and rumination.

For who among us does not view Trek with oblique bemusement, cousins eyeing a rich relative?

Hollywood and TV have always methodically harvested ripened fruit from genre vineyards. Cowboys and detectives are easy for a broad audience to fathom, but true, hard-core science fiction seemed, well, downright eerie.

Its density and strangeness had made TV's job far harder than Hollywood's scare-'em-with-science, giant-bug formula evolved in the 1950s.

Gene Roddenberry's ever-growing profit center began with a single insight, when he casually referred to Trek as "Wagon Train in space." He saw that the genre needed translation into human terms, and so evolved the fundamental strategy that opened sf.

Trek became a huge multimedia phenomenon by imagining a shared experience: Our Gang visits the future. The Enterprise crew had well-defined roles lead by an affable captain. William Shatner saw that humor and a calm, everyday air aboard would be crucial. Spock was Sherlock Holmes in space, the series' most original notion. The

crew/family's often whimsical efforts to convert him to emotion provided an amusing leitmotif against a background blend of the mildly fantastic and reassuringly familiar. Manageable exoticism sold.

Trek taught a generation of mundanes to seek that "sci-fi experience" in this associative way, far from the deliberate dislocations and strangeness sought by genre insiders.

Never did Trek challenge genre stereotypes. By harvesting fresh ideas and themes invented in print it loomed over most conventional TV. My friends wrote some of the best scripts in the first two seasons (Harlan Ellison, David Gerrold, Norman Spinrad, Theodore Sturgeon), only to be often rewritten and finally not invited back.

The series now depends on writers who seem rather proud of their ignorance of written sf, and science as well. I was just starting to write sf then and my friends' experience frightened me away from TV and movies.

Roddenberry's favorite theme was flawed gods, usually alien superbeings or warped humans, often speaking to the problems of hubris. For me, Trek's greatest sins lay in its general scientific incoherence. In the very first show, an alien "salt vampire" preferred to kill people for a few grams of salt in their bodies, rather than simply steal galley stores.

As it spawned offspring series and films, quickie technical solutions threw into question the entire physics and technology of the series. The early shows opted for the "transporter" to avoid expensive shots of rockets landing and lifting off. Thereafter the series dodged the problems of what a society looks like where everything can be quickly duplicated. Worse, plots often relied on telepathy and "mind science" for motivation and twists.

Sf studies the collision between our humanity and an indifferent universe.

Many modern anxieties stem from our broadening awareness of our chilly loneliness. Trek dodged this deeper issue, inventing SF Lite, the sci-fi option. In Trek, human emotion and gut feeling is forever superior to cold logic: the galaxy is user-friendly.

The show pivoted around a desire to please everyone, with a token Russian, Asian and black woman in the crew. This apparently forgave its air of earnest moralizing, a trait we still see today in the frequent oracular pronouncements delivered ex cathedra from the Enterprise bridge. The films continued this; even in the perhaps-best, Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home, the most adventurous position taken is Save The Whales.

Trek's dazzling successes inspired over a hundred novels, a gold mine for Pocket Books and many starving print sf guys.

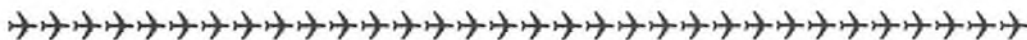
Alas, the hoped-for transference of Trek book readers to mainline sf didn't happen. Perhaps this relates to the unusual popularity of older, Golden Age writers in sf--Heinlein, Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke, Herbert, with their time-honored approaches. Here, too, readers prefer to go to the strange future in the company of somebody they know; it's reassuring.

This suggests that whatever the medium, the way to reach this enormous audience is to find a shared, quasi-communal vehicle. Later, Star Wars made this strategy more explicit with an entire set of future family, its sons-and-fathers revelations played out over three films with three more in the pipeline.

I suppose it did take courage to show TV's first inter-racial kiss, to confront militarism during Vietnam on one hand and soon after to deplore counter-cultural excesses as well. Conventional liberal postures, in a liberal era. Trek did and does assume a world that works, though, surely a reassuring fresh breeze to anyone reading the newspapers.

In Trek's future everyone cheerfully wears spandex and looks great, trim and confident, a remarkable prospect for a nation which, over the last three decades, has seen the average adult add a pound of weight in each passing year.

Could this be the secret heart of our love for the show?



Aussiecon Three Organization, July 1998

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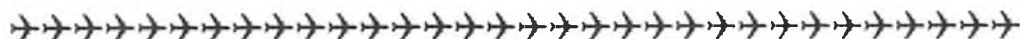
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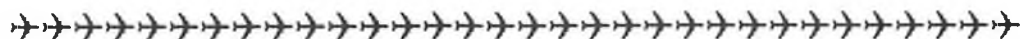
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Aussiecon Three, 2-6 September 1999

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AN AMERICAN IN OZ

Jack Dann

Yeah, it was George R. R. Martin who used to call me “the hermit of Binghamton.”

Binghamton is a small city (or a large town) of about 100,000 people in upstate New York and has been my home town and base of operations for most of my adult life. I was about as tied to a region as anyone could be, and in February 1981 I wrote:

“It has always been my home; and I returned for the kinds of emotional layering and correspondences that I find only here. It is as if there is a corresponding map of Binghamton in my mind, only this map is one of space and time—a grid, so to speak. I remember this same building where I now have my office as it was when I was a child—the building hasn't changed, but as I have, I see it differently now. And yet I have that visceral sensation that the other “me's” caught in those beads of time that I perceive as the past, are still here. And I remember, or rather see, the world as I saw it then. In a way, it's like living in an excavation, and one's life becomes an archaeological dig.

“In the course of a day, I pass by old buildings where I used to live and places where I used to play. I see ghosts everywhere as I pass back and forth through the years, and many of those ghosts are myself. I remember walking up and down Main Street with Gardner Dozois, one of my closest friends, and experience once again that sensation of compacted experience, of being alive in

an open-ended way: the time of the twenties when, as Harlan Ellison might say, we live at the top of our lungs.”

I could not have known then that fifteen years later, I would be as far away from these familiar places as it was possible to get, that I would be an expat...or that I would once again be “living at the top of my lungs.” Although I traveled quite a bit when I was young, I was always rooted to one particular place. It was comfortable, I knew everyone, I understood how business and the town worked...I was *someone* there. I think that's how it is for many of us. And I would have continued to be “the hermit of Binghamton” if I hadn't gotten shot out of a cannon. If my life hadn't suddenly turned upside-down.

So now everything has changed. Once I got *out*, once I broke away from the comfortable, the familiar, I couldn't imagine settling down permanently *anywhere*. At 50 I caught the wanderlust and discovered that I needed novelty and excitement as much as I did when I was 20. I needed to climb trees, fly in airplanes, write books, wander about in strange places, be in love, and make up for some of that time I lost being a hermit. I could have landed in Des Moines, or Albuquerque, or Toronto, or San Francisco, or any number of other interesting places closer to home where life certainly would have been pleasant. But I found myself in a place that seemed familiar at first glance and quite alien once I settled into day to day life.

Aussiecon Three, 2-6 September 1999

Melbourne is a port city of about three million people on the south-east coast of Australia, which, in turn, is about 9,000 miles from Binghamton, New York. It's a young city, founded in 1855. Like Sydney, it's more famous neighbor to the north, which boasts better weather and a faster pace, it is truly multi-cultural. It's a lovely, urban, cafe culture that has not yet gone sour, although there are a few ominous signs. Having spent a lot of time in New York City, I sometimes feel like a visitor from a dark and no so far away future.

I certainly felt that way standing with a crowd of five thousand in Albert Park demonstrating against the state government's decision to turn it into a race track for the 1996 Grand Prix. Sure enough, eight months down the line, one of Melbourne's finest parks has been turned into a traffic island.

Melbourne is a city of parks. It's one fourth park land, and I can walk a block to Fawcner Park, stroll through lanes lined with old Maples, and make my way to the Royal Botanic Gardens, which some consider to be the most beautiful in the world. (I haven't been to many other botanical gardens, so I wouldn't know.) I do spend a lot of time in the parks; it seems to me that they allow the city to "breathe"; and, indeed, the air seems good, although automobile pollution regulations are about twenty years behind the States—if you walk along a highway or a congested road, you can barely breathe!

I don't own a car here. Cars are very expensive (a Honda or Miata is around \$40,000), and all the nice shiny numbers I'm drawn to (the Jags and Mercs and

Beamers) are six figures. It's cheap enough to take cabs and the tram or bus. Public transportation is very good in Melbourne.

Usually, I can just walk.

But I make a point to wear long sleeved shirts and I keep out of the sun between the hours of 11:00 and 3:00, for there really is a hole in the ozone layer and we're close to it here in Melbourne. Last I heard, the hole over Antarctica had grown to the size of Europe. In the summer, there are daily news reports on the ultraviolet radiation.

Most Saturdays, my partner Janeen and I stroll down Commercial Road, past the bookstores and street cafes, through the gay section where over-the-top drag queens will often show themselves off in gaudy, bejeweled splendor, to the Prahran Market, one of the largest markets in Melbourne. Amidst the chaos of screaming vendors ("Any flowers, five dollars the bunch," "Cauliflower, a dollar the bag"), carnival crowds, and Dixieland bands, I buy eggs in brown shells from the egg ladies and fresh fruit and vegetables from my favorite stands. It's no different that anywhere else, in that it's a neighborhood; and I know the people and their families...and feel at home. After loading up with groceries and flowers, we treat ourselves to a café latté and croissant—there are about a hundred restaurants within easy walking distance.

Then home...to work.

Long, uninterrupted days...

I guess I'm now the hermit of Melbourne.

Although many writers here in Australia complain of being away from the "action," i.e., New York, I feel that I'm in closer touch than I was when I was living in the States. I usually do business on the phone after midnight, when it's 10:00 AM in New York. Fax, e-mail, and phone keep me in contact with friends and business. (Of course, phone, fax and e-mail costs about \$300.00 a month US, but that's a small price to pay.) Distance doesn't seem to count anymore; communication technology really has shrunk the world. As long as I have my little laptop computer and access to a telephone, I could live practically anywhere. Before I sat down to write today, I received a long fax from a publisher, ten e-mail messages, and several phone calls from the States. But I feel every one of the long miles when I come back home, for I'm in the air for some twenty hours. Flying in the dark over an eternity of sea.

I've had pals tell me, "Well, of course you love it in Melbourne, you're living in a nice section, walled away from all the crime and racial problems that surely exist there."

I am fortunate to live in a lovely section of the city, but Melbourne really is (comparatively) a safe city. There are suburbs where you have to be careful, but the streets simply aren't that dangerous. It took me a long time to get used to being able to walk around at night. There are some racial problems here, but they are nothing like I'm used to in the States. The tension just isn't in the streets. (This is not to downplay the terrible plight of Australia's Aboriginal people, who are in much the same

position here as Native American Indians are in the States.)

Crime is low here—a mugging is front page news. But the crime rate *is* rising. The Triads have already gained strong footholds in Sydney and Melbourne. There are kid gangs in both cities. While Social services are being downsized, the Victorian State government is supporting the building of a huge casino in Melbourne on land that was originally earmarked for museums, and "pokies" (slot machines) are starting to appear in shopping malls. Hospital personnel complained that they don't have the facilities to handle the rise in violence since the Casino was opened. Public hospitals are being replaced by expensive private hospitals; cutbacks have ruined an efficient medical deployment system—people are outraged that it can now take half an hour for an ambulance to arrive; and I expect I'll soon be seeing more people living on the streets. Ah, progress...

But right now, this minute, Melbourne is still a lovely place to live. The streets are filled with sidewalk cafes, people are friendly, there's great food of every variety. I've found that the Greek restaurants are better in Melbourne than in Athens; and Janeen—who lived in Malaysia for three years—tells me that the Asian restaurants are better here, too. Perhaps it's the quality of the produce. If you were to compare Melbourne to another city, especially in terms of the quality of its restaurants, it would probably be San Francisco. Melbourne has all the amenities. Great theater and opera and jazz and rock. Good bookstores, parks, beaches, and Australian wine is excellent. I've been

disappointed with the big exhibitions the National Gallery has mounted. But then a little rain must fall....

Melbourne is a wide-open town. Several weeks ago one of the local, legal brothels had an open house...and all the pensioners came out for a visit. The local paper showcased them posing with "Madame Lash."

The American dollar is usually strong against the Australian dollar, so my money goes about 25% farther than it would in the States. Australians like Americans, and most Americans feel right at home here. It takes some time to realize that this is a very different place from the States. It's a genuinely secular culture where politicians and comedians debate whether God has a sense of humor on national prime time TV. I still haven't quite gotten used to Australian ironic humor. Or Melbourne's Victorian/oriental architecture. Or driving on the right hand side of the road. After I was here for about three months, everything suddenly looked alien to me. I felt as if I were a million miles from anything familiar. Yet I could turn on the radio and hear rock and roll, turn on the tube and hear American news and the worst of American sitcoms. (I've traveled 9,000 miles and *still* can't get away from "Mr. Ed"!)

Everything *looked* familiar. I guess I would have suffered the same kind of mild culture shock in Paris or Rome or Athens...if I had stayed longer. Being a hermit has its disadvantages. But I was cured by an American who had been living here for fifteen years. When I told her of my symptoms, she laughed and said, "When I first came here, I kept

getting dizzy and falling down. It stopped after a few weeks, and I've been fine ever since."

Gullible sod that I am, once she told me that, I stopped fretting. So what if dialing "0" on the phone won't get you an operator. I can get used to saying "Zed" for the letter "Z". And now tires are tyres and I'm not surprised when people say "G'day" in the middle of the night.

William Gibson once told me that everyone should be an expat. To my surprise, I've found that I *like* being an outsider. I like the distance and, perhaps, the startling sense of seeing one's own culture from afar. Every morning I watch Tom Brokaw, then the Australian news, and then the German news on TV. Three completely different visions of the world.

(The German news is broadcast in English; there are Japanese, Chinese, French, and Italian news programs, but I'm just about monolingual.)

As I write this, France has just detonated its first nuclear device at Muroroa Atoll in the Pacific. That's front page news around here. Barely a mention of it in the American news, which is obsessed with O.J. Simpson.

I wonder what kind of a culture shock I would experience if I went back to the States to live?

Looks pretty weird to me from here.

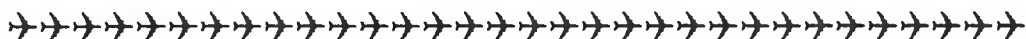
So the old insider is now an outsider. But still a hermit. I just get around a hell of a lot more now.

Hear that, George?

1998 Membership Rates

Attending	AUD\$200	USDS\$155	UK£95
Supporting	AUD\$45	USDS\$35	UK£25
Child	USDS\$45	USDS\$35	UK£25
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Membership rates will increase on 1 September 1998.



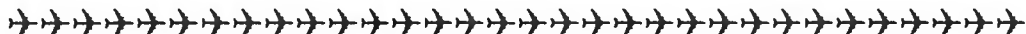
Progress Reports 3 & 4

Progress Report 3 will be mailed in December 1998. Information about our official airline and the discount fares that it will make available to Aussiecon Three members will be included along with information about convention hotels and how to book your accommodation. Nomination forms for the 1999 Hugo Awards will also be included.

Progress Report 4 will be mailed to members in April 1999. Most notably, it will include ballots for the 1999 Hugo Awards.

If you would like to advertise in an Aussiecon Three Progress Report, information about advertising rates and booking schedules is available from the Aussiecon Three home page at www.aussiecon3.worldcon.org. Alternatively, you may contact the Publications Division directly:

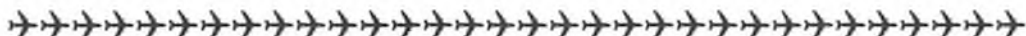
- by email at publications@aussiecon3.worldcon.org; or
- by mail at Aussiecon Three Publications Division, PO Box 181, Campbell ACT 2612, Australia.



Hotels

Bookings for hotel rooms will not be made through the Aussiecon Three committee. All convention bookings will be taken by the Lido Accommodation Agency. We have a block booking at the Centra Hotel (which is the main hotel in the same building as the convention centre) as well as at some other hotels in the immediate vicinity. Stephen Boucher, our Facilities Manager, has used the Lido Accommodation Agency for eight years and has not experienced any major mishaps in that time. Because of the size and nature of Aussiecon Three, we will need at least 1000 rooms for the duration of the convention. A lot of those rooms will be booked by overseas visitors and, while confident of the service that will be provided, recognize that it is almost certain that a few members will experience some problems. We expect that the number of people who do experience problems will be very small.

We hope to have hotel booking forms available by the end of July, about the same time that many of you will receive this Progress Report. In general, rooms will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. We expect the Centra to be the first hotel to be filled. More information about hotels is available from the Aussiecon Three home page (www.aussiecon3.worldcon.org).



Hugo Awards

The Hugo Awards are the Oscars of the science fiction world. They are presented at each year's World Science Fiction Convention to honour work published in the previous year. These are readers' and viewers' awards and members of the awarding Worldcon determine the winners.

The current World Science Fiction Society Constitution provides for the following Hugo categories:

- Novel;
- Novella;
- Novelette;
- Short Story;
- Related Book;
- Dramatic Presentation;
- Professional Editor;
- Professional Artist;
- Semiprozine;
- Fanzine;
- Fan Writer; and
- Fan Artist.

The constitution also allows for the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for Best

New Writer, to be voted upon in a similar manner to the Hugo Awards, but which is not classified as a Hugo Award.

All Aussiecon Three members are eligible to nominate and vote for the Hugo Awards for the best science fiction and related works of 1998. Members of BucConer, the 1998 World Science Fiction Convention, are eligible to nominate (but not to vote on the final ballot unless they are also Aussiecon Three members).

Hugo nomination ballots will be distributed with Progress Report 3. Progress Report 3 will be mailed in December 1998. The deadline for nominations will be sometime in late March 1999. Final Hugo ballots will be distributed with Progress Report 4 which is scheduled to be mailed at the end of April 1999, and voting will close at the end of July 1999. As always, the Hugo winners will be announced at the Hugo Awards ceremony at Aussiecon Three, which will be one of the main events on the convention's programme.

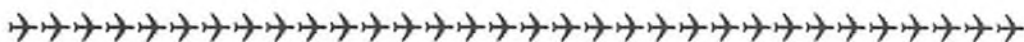
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Site Selection for the 2002 Worldcon

Information for Bidders

Bids to hold the 2002 Worldcon must be in accordance with the Constitution of the World Science Fiction Society (WSFS). One requirement of Article III, Future Worldcon Selection, is that bids to hold the 2002 Worldcon be filed with Aussiecon Three no later than 180 days prior to the official Aussiecon Three opening ceremony.

The official opening ceremony of Aussiecon Three is scheduled for Friday, 3 September 1999. Accordingly, bids to hold the 2002 Worldcon must be received by Aussiecon Three on or before Sunday, 7 March 1999.

Aussiecon Three will accept bids in writing to hold the 2002 Worldcon:

- by mail to Aussiecon Three, GPO Box 1212K, Melbourne VIC 3001, Australia;
- by hand to the Aussiecon Three WSFS Division Head, Stephen Boucher.

Section 3.6 of the WSFS Constitution also states that:

“To be eligible for site selection, a bidding committee must present adequate evidence of an agreement with its proposed site’s facilities, such as a conditional contract or a letter of agreement; and must state the rules under which the Worldcon Committee will operate, including a specification of the term of office of their chief executive officer or officers and the conditions and

procedures for the selection and replacement of such officer or officers.”

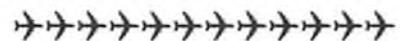
Sites for the 2002 Worldcon must be either in the Western zone of North America or outside of North America. Additional information about bidding for the 2002 Worldcon can be found in the WSFS Constitution.

Information for Voters

Aussiecon Three plans to mail site selection ballots to members on 30 April 1999 in conjunction with Progress Report 4. Voters in the ballot must be either supporting or attending members of Aussiecon Three. Additionally, voters will be required to pay a voting fee. The voting fee will be determined by Aussiecon Three after consultation with the committees bidding for the right to hold the 2002 Worldcon. Details of how to vote and the voting fee will be distributed with the site selection ballots.

Voting, including payment of the voting fee, entitles the voter to a supporting membership in the winning bid, regardless of the actual vote cast by the voter.

Members wishing to vote may do so by mail or in person at the convention, where a voting station will be manned and clearly sign posted. Details of the winning bid, along with voting details, will be announced at a Business Session of the WSFS during Aussiecon Three.



Membership Update

June 1998

A Alyson L. Abramowitz	A Suzy McKee Charnas	S Richard Gilliam
A Florence Achenbach	A Emily Christensen	S J. R. Gimblet
A Jenny Ackroyd	A Harris Christoforov	A Grant Gittus
S Brian Alexander	A Dorothy Christoforov	A Rosemary Gray
A Brian Ameringen	A Liz Cibulskis	S Terence M. Green
A Kathryn Angeli	A Walt Cibulskis	A Norman F. Grenzke, Jr.
A Ronald Angeli	S Michael L. Citrak	A Laura Grossman
S David Arblaster	A Graeme Cliffe	A Karl Hailman
A Rosalinda Arias	A John Cliffe	A Pat Hario
A David Aronovitz	A Carolyn Clink	A Lisa Deutsch Harrigan
A Nancy Aronovitz	S David L. Clink	A Harold Harrigan
A Mark Aronson	S Stewart Cobb	A Harold Harrigan III
A Lynne Aronson	A Howard Coleman	A Shelley R. Hatfield
S Joseph Aspler	A Clare Coney	A Shigeru Hayashide
S Rodney Audin	A Tristrom Cooke	A Nancy L. Henson
S Judy Audin	S Andy Croft	C Christopher Hisle
S Karen Auhl	A Joseph E. Cullity	C Timothy Hisle
S Gerri Balter	A Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain	A James M. Hisle Jr.
S Jonni Bantz	A Byran D'Art	S Beverley Hope
S Dawn Barbe	S Catherine J. De Croy	A Dennis Howard
A Sue Ann Barber	A Daniel Dern	A Patricia James
A Gaby Bate	A Pauline Dickson	A Peter Jarvis
A Ray E. Beam	A Jennifer Dodd	A Athena Jarvis
A Mary Ann Beam	S Carol A. Doms	S Rebekah Jensen
S Patricia Beckett	S Dennis J. Doms	A Karen Johnson
S Asbed Bedrossian	S Frances Doyle	S Keith Johnson
S Joanne Belton	S Roger Earnshaw	A Bonnie Jones
A Catherine Bergquist	A James Edward	A William E. Jones
A Ajay Bhushan	A David Eggins	S Marsha Jones
A Nancy J. Biancamano	A Rod Eggleston	A Tim Jones
A Merv Binns	A Shari Eggleston	A Robert Jordan
S Ted Bleaney	A Guido Essers	S Michael Jordan
A David Bofinger	A Australian Babylon 5	S Reigo Kabutogi
A Susan Booth	Fan Club	A Margaret A. Keifer
A Carol Brandenburg	A Richard Faulder	A Robert Kemp
S Michael Breslau	A Gerald Fechan	A Elaine Kemp
S Esther Breslau	A David Ferguson	A Rick Kennett
A Sharon Brondos	A Roy Ferguson	A Paul Kincaid
S Ned Brooks	A Rosa Field	A Michael Kohne
S Steve Wesley Brown	A Brian Flatt	A Kris Kreutzman
A William Brown	A Roberta Fox	A Arawa Kriesch
S Lynnette M. Burrows	S Jane Frank	A Waldemar Kumming
S Jack Caplan	A Kurt Freiburger	A Daisuke Kusayanagi
A Dana Carson	A Peter Friend	A Dave Kyle
A Melinda Carson	A Janice Gelb	S Valerie Laczko
A Gwendolyn Carson	A Paul T. Giguere	A Christina Lake
S Merle Casci	S Paul J. Giguere	A Dave Langford

Aussiecon Three, 2-6 September 1999

A Alex Latzko	S Dave O'Neal	A Rosie Smith
A Gale Latzko	S Richard Y. O'Shea	A Susan Smith-Clarke
S Myrna Logan	S Laila Osterman	A Maureen Speller
A Stella Luuk	S Per Osterman	A Jeff Stein
A Bradford Lyau	A Kathi D. Overton	S Larry Stewart
A Barry P. Lyn-Waitsman	A Melinne Owen	A Sandy Stewart
A Marcelle H. Lyn-Waitsman	A Michael Paddon	A Risa Stewart
A Bobby MacLaughlin	A Linda Paddon	S Keith W. Stokes
A Elaine Mami	A Susan Palmatier	S Ira Stoller
A Carl Mami	A Sam Paris	A William Strang
A Nina Marie	S Helen M. Parker	A Joy Stretton
A Cheryl Martin	S Mark E. Partridge	A Christopher Stuber
A Roman Mazurak	S Scott Patterson	A Mark K. Sullivan
A Craig McBride	S Dawn Patterson	A Bjorn T. Sund
A Lyn McConchie	A Joseph O. Pearce, Jr.	A Bill Tamre
S Sharane McCurry	A Hayford Peirce	A Irene Tawzer
A Harriet McDougal	A Karen Pender-Gunn	S Suzanna W. Taylor
S Jack McGillis	S Richard Penney	A Byron Tetrick
A Patrick L. McGuire	A Pekka Pirinen	S Christine Thompson
S Nina McLaughlin	S George W. Price	S Donald Thompson
A Sean McMullen	C Miranda Raney	A Richard Threadgill
S Pat McMurray	A Marjorie Redding	A Jillian Thurston
S Connie Mellott	A Virginia R. Reed	S Kimiye Tipton
A Farah Mendlesohn	S Ariel Reich	S Dick Trezza
S Paul Metz	A Jamie Reuel	S Charles Tritt, PhD.
S Stephanie Metz	A Andy Richards	S Eric M. Van
A Brian Middlemiss	S Carrie Richerson	S Edo Van Belkom
A Tineke Middlemiss	A Helena Roberts	S Roberta Van Belkom
A Arthur Miller	S Susan Robertson	A Kay van der Meys
A Tara Miller	S Bob Roehm	A Alf Van Der Poorten
S Dorothy Miller	S Keith W. Rogers	A Barb Van Tilburg
S Rose Mitchell	A Sue Sanderson	A Ray Van Tilburg
S Howard Modell	A Jon Saul	S Mathew Waite
S Celia Modell	A Robert J. Sawyer	A Alta Walker
S Michael L. Moscoe	S Alan B. Sawyer	A Elaine Walker
A Miriam Moss	A Marc Schirmeister	A M. L. Ward
A Marcia L. Muggelberg	S C. T. Scott	A Kenneth Warren
A Caroline Mullan	A Anne Scott	A Gayle Ann Wiesner
A Multiverse Inc.	A Jill Scott	A Barry A. Wilson
A Neil Murray	A Dr. Cheryl Serr	S Joyce Wolf
A Vanessa Neale	A Don Serr	A Bill Wright
A Peter Nichols	S Marcia Shannon	A Allan Yeats
A Kevin Nickerson	S Gregory Mark Shelton	A Robert Zielke
S Katherine K. Nikkec	A Jean Sheward	A Becky Zielke
S Shelagh Nikkec	A Kay White Simons	A Roger Zuidema
A Gerald D. Nordley	A Fred Simons	A Nancy Zuidema
A Elaine Normandy	A Missouri Smith	
A Ronald B. Oakes	A Sam Smith	
A Iain O'Cain	A Bruce Smith	A=Attending
A Mary O'Connor	A Denise Smith	S=Supporting
	S Hank Smith	C=Child



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