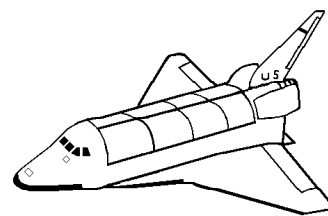


The



SHUTTLE
November 1999

The Next NASFA Meeting is 20 November 1999 at the Regular Time and Location

Oyez, Oyez

The next NASFA meeting will be 20 November 1999 at the regular time (6P) and the regular location (room 130 of the Madison City Municipal Building). If you get there early enough you can accompany Sam Smith as he sleuths through the bowels of the building to open the door for which no one seems to have a key. The program will be a convention postmortem. The November after-the-meeting meeting will be at Pat Brooks and Roland Perry's house (9015 Craigmont Road SW). Directions will be available at the meeting.

We have two volunteers for the December ATMM/Christmas Party so we will need to decide the location at the November meeting.

October Minutes

by Samuel A. Smith, short and...

The October meeting of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association was called to order on Saturday, October 16, 1999 in Room 130 in the Madison City Municipal Building at 6:23P by President Anita Eisenberg. Barney was the smashee of honor, "complete with crickets."

OLD BUSINESS

There was some discussion of a 1991 vintage Chapstick Mike Kennedy had acquired. That was about it.

NEW BUSINESS

The Florence Ren Faire is next week! (Now well past.)
(continued on page 2)

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Deadline for the December 1999 issue of *The NASFA Shuttle* is Friday, 3 December 1999.

(Minutes — continued from page 1)

Sam Smith brought souvenirs from AussieCon and passed them around.

CONVENTION BUSINESS

The old Con†Stellation home page got 253 hits in August and 207 in September. The new Con†Stellation home page got 375 hits in August and 465 hits in September.

We have 134 pre-registrations, 7 of which are not yet paid for.

T-shirts are in and are available at BookMark.

The Program Book is going to bed this weekend.

The Dating Game preparations are in progress.

The Art Show pickup is Sunday, October 24th at 2P. The Art Show return should be at the same time on Sunday, November 7th. (Nope, it wasn't.) [Actually, yes it was. I knew about it but forgot to go and I guess we all forgot to pass the word to you. -ED]

At this point the meeting digressed into a discussion of flammable petroleum products.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34P. If there was a program I missed it. The After-The-Meeting Meeting was held at Sam Smith's place.

NASFA Calendar

NOVEMBER

- 04–07 World Fantasy Convention 1999 — Providence RI.
- 11 Veteran's Day.
- 19–21 Exoticon 2 — Metairie LA.
- 20* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at the Madison City Municipal Building. ATMM at Pat Brooks and Roland Perry's house.
- 22 BD: Nancy Renee Peters
- 23 BD: Michael D. Kennedy.
- 23 BD: Wilson "Bob" Tucker .
- 25 Thanksgiving Day.
- 26–28 ConCat 11 — Knoxville TN.
- 29 BD: Howard Camp.
- 30 BD: Patricia Brooks.
- 30 BD: Richard Gilliam.

DECEMBER

- 04 Hanukkah.
- 10–12 SMOFcon 17 — New Orleans LA.
- 12 BD: Toni Weisskopf.
- 17 BD: Robin Ray.
- 18* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at the

Madison City Municipal Building. ATMM — see info in the Announcements on page 1.

- 19 BD: Harry Warner, Jr.
- 25 Christmas Day.
- 26 BD: Michael R. Stone.
- 26 Boxing Day.
- 31 New Year's Eve, party anyone?

JANUARY 2000

- 01 New Year's Day.
- 03 BD: Jim Kennedy.
- 05 BD: Debbie Mitchell.
- 06 BD: Rich Garber.
- 07 BD: Douglas E. Lampert.
- 14–16 Chattacon XXV — Chattanooga TN.
- 15* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at the Madison City Municipal Building. ATMM TBD. NOTE: Could be moved to accommodate Chattanooga.
- 17 BD: Martin Luther King.
- 20 BD: Larry Montgomery.

FEBRUARY 2000

- 02 Groundhog Day.
- 08 BD: Lin Cochran.
- 09 BD: Jack Lundy.
- 10 BD: Marcia Illingworth.
- 11 BD: Jeanna Woosley.
- 12 BD: Abraham Lincoln.
- 14 Valentine's Day.
- 17 BD: Nancy A. Cucci.
- 19* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at the Madison City Municipal Building. ATMM TBD.
- 21 BD: Susan Stockell.
- 21 President's Day.
- 25 BD: Nicholas Mitchell.

OoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOo

The North Alabama Science Fiction Association meets on the third Saturday of each month. (Unless there is a large nearby convention being held that weekend — in which case we usually hold the meeting on the second or fourth weekend.) The regular meeting location is room 130 of the Madison City Municipal Building. The Executive Committee meeting (if scheduled) is held at 5P. The business meeting is held at 6P. The program begins at 7P. Anyone is welcome to attend any of the meetings. There is usually an after-the-meeting meeting with directions available at the program.

Welcome to Down Under, Down Under

by Steve and Sue Francis

[This trip report was written for publication in the November 1999 issue of the *Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin*. It is reprinted here by kind permission of the authors and SFC President Julie Wall. -ED]

This is a tale of our travels in Australia around the time of AussieCon 3, the 57th World Science Fiction Convention. We left Louisville on Wednesday, August 25th and started off by having our United flight through Chicago to LA switched to TWA through St Louis because of bad weather in Chicago.

However all connections were made and we arrived in LA an hour earlier than originally scheduled. We found Margaret Keifer (one of two people who has attended all 50 MidWest-Cons in Cincinnati) at our United gate. Visiting with her made our time fly by quickly.

After approximately 30 hours in the air and bouncing through the airports (five of them) we arrived in Melbourne, Australia. Somehow we took a wrong turn and managed to get past customs and immigration without checking in. With the

help of a friendly airport staff person we finally passed through immigration without a hitch. The flight from Melbourne to Hobart, Tasmania was uneventful and we arrived at the airport about 1 PM on Friday, August 27th (still Thursday in the States). After claiming our bags we caught a taxi and headed off to the bed and breakfast which was to be our home for the next four days.

The name of our bed and breakfast was the Colville Cottage. It is situated in Battery Point, a beautifully-kept old residential section of Hobart. The reservation was arranged by Robin Johnson (Chairman of AussieCon 1) for us. It is located at 32 Mona Street right next door to Robin's home. The place was a very old home converted to a bed and breakfast. Carl and Louise (the owners of the B&B) kept the home in immaculate condition. Carl and Louise made us feel perfectly at home and served up a wonderful breakfast each day. They were typical of the very friendly people of Tasmania and of Australia in general. As a side note, Tasmania is the island state of Australia, not a separate country. We detected none of the animosity evident toward Americans found in some other countries.

Our first day there was devoted to kicking the jet lag, so we went out exploring on foot. I had decided not to try driving in Australia because of the left hand driving lanes. I was afraid that in a stressful situation my instinct would take over and I would find myself in the right lane (which does not work well there). We found it to be easy to walk everywhere we wanted to go in Hobart. It is a relatively compact town of about 100,000 people.

We had planned to try to make our bookings for the day trips on our first day there. We headed downtown looking for the tourist information office and stopped on a corner checking out our map and looking very puzzled. At that moment a very kind gentleman stopped and asked if he could be of help (another example of the friendliness exhibited by the Australians). We asked where the tourist office was and he said it was the pink building just across the street. We had found it but did not realize it yet. The lady in the office was very helpful and we booked our trips to Port Arthur, The Cadbury Chocolate Factory, and the bus trip to Devonport. Devonport is the departure point for the Spirit of Tasmania, an overnight ferry that runs across the Bass Strait to Melbourne 3 times a week.

After booking the local trips we wandered around town and explored the area around the docks at the harbor. We checked out the area around Salamanca Place where the Salamanca Market would be set up the next morning. After a few hours of exploring and shopping we made our way back to the bed and breakfast (from here on in referred to as "home"). A short time later Robin Johnson contacted us and made a date for supper and to see the opening of a new art exhibition in one of the old converted warehouse buildings along Salamanca Place. After seeing the exhibit and meeting some of Robin's Artist friends, Robin, his wife Alicia, Sue, and I had a Tasmanian version of Chinese fast food for supper. By this time we were ready for a good night's sleep. We had forced ourselves to stay up as late as we could to help minimize the effects of being 14 hours and 1 day off our regular biological schedule.

As you may have noticed, I have written 2 pages and so far have only covered the flight to Tasmania and the first day. This is going to be a very long story of our travels.

Our breakfast was set for 7:30 AM, so we made our way to the main house and the enclosed porch area which was set up as the breakfast room. For breakfast there was a choice of several cereals, fresh fruit, juice, scones or toast, bacon and eggs fixed my choice, or the daily special. At breakfast we met

Walter and Maureen Heaton, who were down from Devonport on holiday. They are a very nice pensioned couple (originally from England) now living in Tasmania. After breakfast we set out for the Salamanca Market which was about a 15 minute walk from home.

We found the market stretching along Salamanca Place in front of the row of converted warehouses we had visited the evening before. It had hundreds of temporary stalls set up with vendors selling everything you can think of. There were souvenirs, fruits and vegetables, flowers, clothing, games, craft works, beautiful hand knitted (Tasmanian wool) sweaters, food, and even one dealer selling antique tools. The market was four rows across and ran for about a half mile along the street. We shopped for about 4 hours until our feet said "enough already!" The market was as much fun as Roger Sims told us that it would be. It was here that we began to fill the extra suitcase we brought for the return trip. There were a number of people passing out pamphlets and wearing signs. We did not pay much attention to them but it reminded us of home. There were different musical groups performing intermittently during the day and Hobart has its very own Town Crier wandering about the market place.

As we made our way back home we passed through several little mini-parks which dotted the area around Battery Point. A bit of a rest was in order after the market, so we relaxed in our room, Steve slept and Sue read. About an hour after we had returned to the room there was a knock on our door. Much to our surprise it was Walter. He and Maureen were going to motor up to the top of Mt. Wellington, which overlooks Hobart, and he asked if we would like to join them. So off we went on an unexpected side trip up the mountain. After about 45 minutes of narrow winding roads we found ourselves at the top of a very cold and windy Mt. Wellington, 1720 meters above sea level.

The fog was quite dense and we could not see anything but our immediate surroundings, not even the top of the TV tower set on the peak. So we wandered around the overlook and the observation decks for a while when all of a sudden a wind came up and blew all of the fog away. We had a magnificent view of Hobart, the Tasman bridge, the harbor and the Derwent River. The view was fabulous. After returning home, we joined Robin and Alicia for dinner at DaAngelos, a fine Italian restaurant only a block away from home. We would not have been able to eat there if it had not been for Robin and Alicia. (They are frequent diners at DaAngelos.) We then adjourned to a place called Mummy's for dessert. They served such large desserts. We then went back to our room, checked out the "Telly" to see if we could find out what was happening in the world. All of the news was about the turmoil in East Timor in Indonesia. This was big news in Australia as East Timor is only 700 km from the north coast of Australia. More about that later. We then fell asleep. All in all one hell of a g'day mates.

On Sunday, we were picked up by car to begin our trip out to Port Arthur, the 1830's penal colony where England dumped all of their undesirables. The bus trip out to the peninsula where Port Arthur is located was long but filled with many interesting sights and tales from our bus driver. We arrived at the visitors center and began our tour of the grounds (after the obligatory look about in the gift shop).

The grounds were quite extensive with many of the old buildings remarkably well preserved. Much restoration had to be done after the disastrous bush fires that struck the area earlier in the century. What remained presented a very grim picture of what life must have been like for the inmates of this

ancient prison. Most of the written records were lost to the fires, so there are few accounts of who the inmates or their guards actually were. The grounds were beautifully kept, but the place still presented a very somber and sobering ambiance.

After a second stop at the gift shop (this time to shop) and lunch we returned to Hobart by bus. The place we selected for dinner was called El Taco, a Mexican restaurant located a few doors away from DaAngelos. The appetizer we chose was Guacamole. Our waitress brought out this huge bowl of guacamole and chips. We didn't think that we would be able to eat our entrees but we managed. No dessert this time however. The entire meal was excellent and we were very happy with our choice of restaurants. We went back home, and decided to call a taxi and go to the casino. Sue spent the \$25.00 we allotted for the casino, then returned home and watched the telly for a short time.

This time we watched a girls basketball game. This was a different game of basketball than what girls play in the US. The first noticeable difference is the uniforms. Australian girls wear a uniform that is similar to our cheerleaders with little short skirts. Another difference is that their basketball goal does not have a backboard. The young ladies do not dribble the basketball, they just pass it around. When they are ready to shoot the basket, everyone freezes except the closest opposing guard who puts her hands up in the air as if to block the ball. There is no touching of the other team's players, which makes for a very tame and different game. We then crashed for the night around 9 PM.

Monday our day trip was to the Cadbury Chocolate Factory in Claremont, a few kilometers north of Hobart. We selected the river cruise as our means of travel to the factory. It was a relaxing 1 1/2 hour trip up the Derwent river to Claremont. The boat's narrator kept us entertained with a series of commentaries about the features along the river. There was a certain amount of BS mixed in with the stories. Of particular interest was the story of the barge that struck a pier supporting the Tasman Bridge in Hobart and the subsequent collapse of 2 sections of the bridge. This event had a major impact on the Hobart area back in 1975, when the people who lived on the peninsula across the river could not get to work, and the ones at work could not get home. They then built a second temporary pontoon bridge. The Bowen Bridge was built in 1984 a few kilometers up river from the Tasman Bridge. This bridge replaced the temporary pontoon bridge.

We arrived at the dock and walked up a gravel path to the entrance to the chocolate factory. We could smell the chocolate even before we entered the place. After a brief orientation (no cameras were allowed inside) a very charming guide named Sue conducted us on the tour through the plant, explaining the processes as we went along. There were numerous "feeding stations" along the way, where we were invited to try samples of the various products. It did not take long before most of us were ready to swear off of chocolate for a long time (speak for yourself Steve). After the tour, Sue (my wife, not the tour guide) purchased 5 kg (11 lbs.) of mixed chocolates to take to the convention. We even managed to bring a couple of pounds back to the US for ourselves. We returned to the dock to catch the cruise boat back to Hobart. Needless to say we ate very light for that night's supper.

Tuesday morning we went in for our 7:30 breakfast, and to say our good-byes to Carl and Louise, before heading north on the bus to Devonport. Every day Louise and Carl would play some light background music on the CD player in the kitchen as she prepared breakfast. On the second morning she was

playing some of Enya's selections including Orinoco Flow. I asked her to turn it up a little so I could hear it better in the breakfast area. It happens to be one of my favorite pieces. On Tuesday morning at Breakfast, she played it again. What more appropriate than a song containing the words "Sail away - Sail away - Sail away" just before leaving to catch the Spirit of Tasmania to Melbourne.

The bus trip took about 6 hours total, including a stopover in Launceston. This is a small town in the North of Tasmania maintaining much of the flavor and colonial architecture of the 19th century. We wandered about the city center, had lunch and then headed off for Devonport to catch the Spirit.

We boarded the "Spirit of Tasmania" about 5 PM. The Spirit is a combination cruise ship and auto ferry. The lowest 3 decks are cargo bays for automobiles and the upper decks contain the passenger cabins, restaurants, bars, casino, a game room for teenagers, and a play room (with videos) for the youngest children. The crossing was very smooth across the Bass Strait and lasted about 14 hours. We had reserved the large suite for our trip, it was about 2/3 the size of a regular hotel room. This was the top-of-the-line cabin, but what the hell, we were only going to do this once. No sea sickness was experienced (we cheated and took seasickness pills before we sailed). That evening we had a very pleasant supper in one of the ship's restaurants. We learned before we left Australia that the Spirit of Tasmania had three of its four main engines break down about 2 weeks after we had made the crossing. That was way too close for comfort. The crossing on the Spirit was well worth doing, and we recommend it to anyone visiting Tasmania (after the engines are repaired of course).

Upon arriving at the Melbourne harbor and after a short wait we arranged for a taxi to take us to the Centra on the Yarra Hotel. AussieCon 3 was being held in the Melbourne Convention Centre which is directly accessible from the Centra Hotel lobby. This complex is located on the southwest corner of the downtown Melbourne area. The city has a wonderful tram system that you can use to travel anywhere you want. Auto traffic is heavy and about what you would expect in a city of 3 million.

After checking in to the hotel, we located the others in our group that we had planned to meet in Melbourne. We found Pat and Roger Sims, Bill and Cokie Cavin, Dick Spelman, Debbie Oakes, Margaret Keifer, and Chris Stuber. The Melbourne Zoo was to be our next stop. We took the tram to the back entrance of the zoo, made sure our cameras were all loaded, and had a great relaxing afternoon wandering about the zoo and taking pictures. Somehow in our trek thru the zoo, we lost Bill and Cokie Cavin and ended up returning to the hotel without them. That evening after supper we checked out the convention area, and signed up for our time slots to work in the at-the-door registration area. Sue worked several shifts at registration, and I did one shift at registration and was a member of the site selection ballot counting crew on Saturday evening. The CFG hospitality suite was opened that evening and continued to be available thru Sunday night.

On Thursday we cast our ballots for the 2002 Worldcon. San Jose, California (aka ConJosé) won with 666 votes out of a total of 820 votes that were cast. The huckster room and art show were quite small by Worldcon standards but relatively well stocked with books and art respectively. We did not spend much time in either and are looking forward to the monster rooms common at US Worldcons. The main convention center foyer was used for registration, at-con sales, the freebie tables, and information. It probably could have contained site selec-

tion and the bidders tables as well. The latter were located in a rear area on the back side of a block of meeting rooms.

At the business meetings (and after listening to Mr. Sacks for a while) several things were accomplished. Sue was re-elected to the Marks Protection Committee for her fourth 3-year term. The amendment to revert to a two-year voting cycle was narrowly defeated as was a proposal to split the dramatic presentation Hugo award into two divisions, a long form (100 minutes or more) and a short form (less than 100 minutes). The main piece of business was the passage of the no-zone site selection process with a 500 mile exclusion zone. When this amendment to the constitution goes into effect (no seated Worldcons or current bids will be affected by this change), any city anywhere can bid as long as it is beyond a 500 mile radius of the city hosting the site selection for that year. This theoretically means that one city could conceivably host the Worldcon three years in a row, but not the fourth (as if any con committee would be crazy enough to try this). There are probably other ramifications to this change but we will leave that to the nit-picking and fly-specking committee.

At present, the seated Worldcons are as follows:

2000 - Chicon 2000 - Chicago, Illinois.

2001 - The Millennium Philcon - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

2002 - ConJosé - San Jose, California.

At present there are a number of Worldcon bids (real and imagined) on the table:

2003 - Cancun vs. Toronto.

2004 - Charlotte NC vs. New York vs. wherever Boston decides to bid (how about Louisville?).

2005 - United Kingdom vs. ?

2006 - A possible bid for Dallas.

2007 - Melbourne, Australia for AussieCon 4.

No one has announced a bid beyond that year to our knowledge.

On Friday we took a bus to the Healesville Wildlife Preserve located a couple of hours north east of Melbourne by bus. This area contained many animals and birds indigenous to Australia as opposed to the Melbourne Zoo which contained wildlife from all over the world. We enjoyed the tour, which was narrated by a very well informed tour guide named Mary Anne. At mid-day we enjoyed a lunch break at the Preserve's cafeteria. After lunch we were treated to a very entertaining demonstration involving several quite large birds of prey found only in Australia. We returned that evening to enjoy a round of bid parties and the continuation of the CFG suite on the tenth floor of the hotel.

Saturday was devoted to shopping in Melbourne, purchasing our ConJosé pre-supporting memberships and counting ballots, as well as the usual round of Wizards playing in the CFG suite. Saturday night, the Hugo Award ceremony was held. As mentioned earlier, Steve and Dick were asked by Mark Linneman to join the site selection ballot counting committee. We set a new time record for counting ballots and posting the winner. It took only 41 minutes to complete. I have now been a member of the ballot counting committees that took the longest (14 hours in Chicago in 1991), the shortest as mentioned above, and the count with the most ballots cast (Atlanta vs. Glasgow at Magicon in 1992). I pre-supported Toronto in 2003 at their party that evening for \$15 and turned right around and won a \$25 hardcover Ben Bova book in their drawing. Sue played more rounds of Wizards that night in the CFG suite.

Sunday was highlighted by the announcement of the site selection winner and the purchase of attending membership

conversions for ConJosé. We went shopping at Victoria Market and tried to find a hat that would fit my head. Unfortunately we could not find one large enough. Sue attended the Marks Protection Committee meeting held late that afternoon. We had dinner with Stephen Boucher (AussieCon 3's facilities manager) on Sunday evening in the hotel restaurant. We were invited to attend the past Worldcon chairs' party after dinner where we met several of the past chairmen that we did not know. The Masquerade was also held on Sunday evening. We went back up to the CFG Suite briefly and then returned to our room to finish re-packing for our whirlwind tour of northeast Australia.

We had to go to bed early, as we had to leave at 6:40 AM the next morning. Pat had made arrangements for our transportation so we had three taxis waiting to take us to the airport. Our small group of nine people had expanded to a group of 15 by this time. We were joined by Carolyn Hickman (Lynn Hickman's widow), her daughter Kharis and son-in-law Russell, co-worker Sabrina, and friends of the Cavins, Don and Dottie Gilbert. We all checked in at the airport, checked our luggage and were off to Uluru (Ayers Rock) by way of Alice Springs. All we saw of Alice Springs was the airport when we changed planes. Arrangements were made to leave some of our luggage behind at the hotel as we would be returning to the Centra for our last night in Australia.

After arriving at Ayers Rock, and checking into the Outback Pioneer Hotel, we went to the small shopping center located near our hotel and bought some juice and sweet rolls for breakfast the next morning. We also fitted in a little souvenir shopping. We finally found a couple of Aussie hats that fit us. We caught the shuttle bus back to the hotel and prepared for our evening at the "Sounds of Silence." While we were waiting for our group to board the bus, the bus driver called Bill Cavin's name. They were to board the bus that was already there. We told Bill and Cokie to save seats for all of us and shortly after they left we boarded our buses. When we arrived after a bumpy bus trip on a very narrow and unpaved road, we followed a gravel path up a small hill. We walked at a comfortable speed up the hill for approximately ten minutes. When we got to the top of the hill, there were waiters and waitresses dressed in formal attire passing out glasses of champagne. Remember, this is all outdoors in the middle of the Australian Outback, a thousand kilometers from any large city. There were many tables with white tablecloths, and complete setup for a formal dinner. We did not see Bill and Cokie anywhere. Unfortunately, it turned out that there were two areas set up for this dinner and the other bus went to the other side of Ayers Rock.

The restaurant that had prepared our meal and their staff was of 5 star quality. Our menu was an Australian barbecue buffet. The entrees were emu, crocodile, kangaroo, buffalo, lamb and baramundi (an excellent white fish). And yes, we tried them all. We found them all to be quite good. There were vegetables as well, but... After a couple of glasses of champagne, Steve tried playing the didgeridoo. It was very loud, but not very tuneful.

We were dining by candlelight and after everyone had finished dinner, the staff went around and snuffed out the candles and turned out all the lights. Wow!!!! The sky lit up as we had never seen before.. In a perfectly clear sky, with no light pollution, you could see the Southern Cross, the Milky Way, Mars, and Alpha Centauri (the star that is the closest to us at 4.3 light years). Alpha Centauri has had more SF stories written about it than any other. The resident astronomer told us many wonderful aboriginal stories about how the stars and

constellations were named. He used a powerful hand held spotlight like a blackboard pointer to point out the various stars and constellations as he spoke. If any one thing that we saw in Australia could be said to make the whole trip worthwhile, this view of the southern sky was it! The gas lights were turned on afterwards so we could safely find our way back down the path to our waiting buses. We all went to bed early again that night, as we planned to watch the sunrise at Ayers Rock as well.

We all got up before dawn and had our juice and sweet rolls before catching the bus back to Ayers Rock. We watched the sun come up and how the rising sun caused the color of Ayers Rock to change. We took photos every 10 minutes to get the entire effect of the color change. The Rock turns a bright red color when the sun's rays actually strike the rock. The wind was quite gusty that morning and time was short, so we did not get to climb to the top of Ayers Rock as we had hoped. Maybe the next time... After a time, we all reboarded the buses, went back to the hotel, grabbed our luggage and returned to the airport. This time we were on our way to Darwin in the Northern Territory and the Carleton Hotel.

We had dinner at The Crustaceans, an upscale seafood restaurant located at the wharf on the harbor. We noted all of the naval activity in the area as the UN peacekeepers were preparing to leave for East Timor in Indonesia. Their mission was to try and stop the violence being perpetrated on the civilian population of East Timor following their vote for independence from the rest of Indonesia. East Timor is less than 700 kilometers from Darwin.

Wednesday morning we were off for a two-day tour of Kakadu National Park. On the way to the park, the bus driver told us that the people living in the Northern Territory were very laid back and casual. They live on what is called "NT" time. This means that if you ask when something will be ready, the reply will be "Not Today, Not Tonight, Not Tomorrow, Not Tuesday, and Not Thursday!" We traveled on the Adelaide River and the Marrakai Plains deep into the park. Our first walking tour took us to Nourlangie Rock where we could view and photograph some of the ancient Aboriginal rock paintings. We then climbed up to the scenic lookout over the Kakadu woodlands and the plains. The view was magnificent! We then had lunch and went on the Yellow Waters boat cruise to view salt water crocodiles and the prolific bird life. We saw one extraordinarily large crocodile sleeping on the river bank. The tour guide said she had never seen that particular crocodile before and that it was the biggest she had ever seen. We also visited the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Center. That night, we stayed at the Gagudju Crocodile hotel, and yes folks it is shaped like a giant crocodile. You enter the hotel lobby through the mouth of the crocodile. Needless to say, Sue immediately found the gift shop. The crocodile's feet were the stairs to the second level sleeping rooms. After a dip in the hotel pool we played Wizards and again hit the sack early. Those early mornings were killing us.

On Thursday we took a boat cruise on the East Alligator River and saw Ubirr rock art (some of the paintings are believed to be 20,000 years old). While we cruised the East Alligator, our Aboriginal guide showed us some items that had been made and used by the Aboriginal people. There are no alligators on the East Alligator river in spite of its name. The early explorer who named the river was from Florida and did not know the difference between alligators and crocodiles. With the permission of the Aboriginal people living in the area, we were allowed to leave the boat and go ashore in Arnhem Land. Our guide told us that he considered it a great privilege

to be allowed to set foot in Arnhem Land. We toured the Bowali Visitor's Center, then returned to the Carleton Hotel in Darwin.

Our next trip took us to Katherine Gorge, about 250 kilometers southwest of Darwin by bus. A cruise by boat took us through two of the thirteen gorges that form Katherine Gorge. The sheer rock faces of the gorge were magnificent. There was a 1/4 mile walk between the first and second gorge over some very rocky terrain. This gave us an excellent opportunity for taking photographs and video tape of the area. On our return trip from the Gorge, we stopped at Edith Falls, where some of our group went for a swim in the pool at the base of the waterfall. The rest of us went on a rather strenuous hike up to an overlook that gave us a spectacular view of the falls and the pool below. We then returned to Darwin with an evening stop at the Adelaide River.

On several of our bus trips in the Northern Territory, we saw a number of Road Trains on the highways. These are very large trucks with multiple trailers. Most of the Road Trains that we saw had three or four trailers, but could have as many as six trailers. We talk about our eighteen wheelers, but these road monsters can have as many as 120 wheels.

We left Darwin at 5:30 AM on Saturday bound for Cairns on the east coast of Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef. After checking into the Holiday Inn, we had the remainder of the day free to wander about the area and of course more shopping. Dick noticed a "Johnny Rocket's" American hamburger restaurant on the mezzanine level of The Pier (a two level shopping mall at the waterfront). Dick, Pat, Roger, Sue, and I decided that it was about time for a good old fashioned American hamburger and fixin's. During the meal, we were treated to a very entertaining floor show. The entire staff of the restaurant came out on the floor and performed a line dance to a rock'n'roll number from the fifties. Later some of us used the free time to wash our clothes in the hotel's laundry. For supper, Debbie Oakes recommended JH's Restaurant on the Balcony just down the block from the hotel. The food was plentiful and very good and Sue made the comment that "the desserts were to die for!" The manager/waiter was very entertaining and nicknamed Cokie Cavin "Mrs. Hat." She was the only one of our party wearing one at supper.

Sunday morning, we rode the Kuranda Scenic Railway from Cairns to Kuranda, the "Village in the Rainforest," high in the mountains above Cairns. Kuranda is a typical tourist haven with many shops (much to Sue's delight), sidewalk vendors, restaurants, and wildlife sanctuaries. Sue and I chose the Australian Butterfly Sanctuary for our morning's entertainment. This is the largest such sanctuary in Australia. We had never seen so many different varieties of butterfly with all of their beautiful vivid colors. The butterflies were so tame and used to people that several of them landed on Sue's hand, wristwatch, and on her sweater. After a lunch at one of the sidewalk food vendors, we proceeded to the Skyrail cable car terminal. The Skyrail is a series of enclosed cars suspended on a cable that carries you high over the rainforest from Kuranda back down the mountain to Cairns. Sue was not sure she wanted to board the small car hanging from that skinny little cable, but she did. After a bit she was too busy standing up and taking pictures of the rainforest to worry about the cable car. There were two stops along the Skyrail route that allowed us to see the rainforest close up.

After leaving the Skyrail at the foot of the mountain, we went to a showing of one of the Aboriginal cultural exhibits. This was a reenactment of the "Dream Time" which dates back tens of thousands of years in Aboriginal history. We caught the

early bus back to our hotel, then headed over to JH's again for dinner (what the heck, it was good and it was close to the hotel). The bunch then retired to the Dick's room for the usual round of Wizards.

Monday was to be the big day in the Cairns area. We boarded the Ocean Spirit for our cruise out into the Coral Sea and the Great Barrier Reef. Michelmas Cay is a small sandy island about 35 kilometers out to sea. A fine buffet lunch was served before we reached the island. When we arrived we were treated to a ride on a semi-submersible boat which gave us a remarkable view of the coral reefs and sea life near the island. Some of the group went snorkeling and others went scuba diving. Sue elected to try scuba diving and loved every minute of it. Dick Spelman, Margaret Keifer, and I took the launch to the island for more picture taking. We waited for the scuba divers to return to the island to no avail; they swam back to the Ocean Spirit instead. We took the launch back to the Ocean Spirit and set off on the return trip to Cairns. On the fore deck a crewman was entertaining the passengers with some Australian folk music. As I came forward I heard him singing "Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport." That evening we went along the Esplanade to a place called The Night Market for supper. The Night Market is an indoor mall-like area that goes through the building to the next street north. Along the Esplanade there were a great many shops on either side of the entrance to The Night Market stretching from the hotel to The Pier (a distance of four or five city blocks).

Tuesday was to be our last day of touring and sightseeing of this great and adventurous trip to Australia. Another bus trip and we arrived at the Daintree Rainforest Environmental

Centre late in the morning. As we walked through the rain-forest preserve, we had a chance to see a great variety of plant life that one will not see in the northern hemisphere. The foliage was very dense and lush and very well cared for by the park officials and staff. The tree that impressed us the most was one that had its roots growing up instead of down. Later that day, we took a short boat cruise on the Daintree River, but only saw one lonely crocodile and one large snake partially hidden in a tree. Our last trip of the day was by bus to the beach at Cape Tribulation, where a bit of wading in the Coral Sea was enjoyed by several of the group. We ran into Joni Dashoff (the wife of Millennium Philcon chairman Todd Dashoff) on the beach. On the way back to Cairns we crossed the Daintree River on a cable ferry and had a final stop for food.

The next morning we packed up and set out for the airport for our flight back to Melbourne and the Centra Hotel. Upon arriving at the hotel we reclaimed our stored luggage, checked in, and met with Stephen Boucher for our last supper in Australia. After supper, we repacked our luggage for the long trip home and adjourned to the CFG parlor (Bill Cavin had upgraded his room to a suite for the last night) for one last round of Wizards. At 11:30 AM we were on our way home with stops in Auckland, New Zealand, Los Angeles, and Chicago. I was worried that we would not have time to clear customs in LA with only a one-hour layover at LAX. We made it through OK, but Mark Linneman did not. He did not get home to Cincinnati until the next day. When we finally reached Louisville, we really appreciated Judy Garland's last line in "The Wizard of Oz." We are already thinking about doing it all again in 2007 (assuming that the Aussies win the Worldcon again).

Letters of Comment

POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC

Sheryl Birkhead
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Gaithersburg MD 20882

7 October 1999

Once again, the directive to say/do it now struck home. I'd carried one of my Sector General books to one Worldcon — to have James White sign it — but I never found him. I wrote and he said for me to mail it to him and he'd autograph it — I never did. Now I never can.

Condolences on the loss of Mike Ray and I hope "Doc" Brookshire is doing better.

To balance that, congratulations to the Millers on Scott's arrival.

What was the pie? Looks a bit like a pineapple upside down cake.

[As you'll see in Mike Glicksohn's email below, the bad news continues. Fandom is, in some senses, an extended family. In a family that large we will, unfortunately, be confronted by the deaths of our cousins all too often. At this remove in time I'm afraid I cannot remember details of the food dishes that have, er, graced the pages of the *Shuttle*. I'll try to remember this and work in some information in each issue to tell you more about the food pictures. That won't be a problem for several months — until the "eating meetings" start for next year's con. -ED]

POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC

Sheryl Birkhead
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18 October 1999

Well, this old typer has a lot of dust problems, but it appears that the Okidata ribbon sort of works — it now looks as if the spool isn't — so I'd better take a look and now all I see is that there is a mess — but this is one step closer to having a functional ribbon.

Agh — I'd forgotten the joys of carbon all over the fingers — but it is so much nicer to be able to type some place other than at the computer screen.

Something is still not right — but until I check it out on a regular piece of paper [instead of a stiff postcard], I'm not sure *how* wrong it is. But back to the *Shuttle*...

Hmm — werewolf food items? Can't wait to see what showed up.

In the past, worldcons have taken up to a year to send along the package of goodies to supporting members (and even then, the amount of extras varies tremendously from con to con — wonder what and when Aussiecon will come through?). The Lynches brought me a copy of Con José PR #0 so it is only a matter of time until #1 follows along.

I hesitate to speculate on what Randy paid for the Eggleton piece — good art by "names" usually doesn't come cheaply!

Rotsler (and Freas in the pro artist category) were the perennial nominees — and until I went back and re-read the bit Rotsler wrote for me, I had not realized he had actually been doing fanart for 25 years before he had his first nomination (of course once he made the ballot he seldom slipped off!) — so the overnight successes were actually a “bit” longer than that. Yeah, looking through the jockeying of positions in the Australian ballot is often interesting when the final positions have little (if any) relation to their starting spots.

I actually have four typers, two are fairly useable — I need to get another of these ribbons for it and see what happens — it has elite type (and even a smaller size of *that*) — the standard High School graduation present when I graduated. Looks as if the spooling mechanism on this one won't rewind on its own so I need to rewind by hand.

My apologies, you are the Guinea pig — but it was the *Shuttle* which had the suggestion from Tucker — thanks to you and him.

[The new ribbon started out pretty faint, but suddenly darkened about 40% of the way through your postcard. In the end the only problems evident to this reader were uneven line spacing and closed counters on some of the letters — either wear or the keys just need cleaning. So all in all I'd say you seem to have successfully resurrected your typewriter. Randy mentioned the purchase price of his Eggleton piece but I don't remember it. I do remember it didn't seem out of line. -ED]

LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC

Harry Warner, Jr.
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19 October 1999

The most remarkable thing I found in the October *Shuttle* was the laconic mention of a mattress contest Anita will attend in Memphis. I know various science fiction people have had trouble getting the Hugos they won home on aircraft, but I would think it would be even more difficult to travel with a mattress. And suppose someone wanted to enter several mattresses in the competition! My guess is that mattress fans frequently switch their hobby to stamp collecting.

I also learned from this issue the identity of the fan guests of honor for the 2002 worldcon. The convention committee could hardly have made a better choice than the Trimbles. Bjo practically invented Star Trek fandom and John was a stalwart in fanzine fandom for a while, although I've heard little from him in recent years.

I appreciate the advice from Bob Tucker about where to find ribbons for acoustic typewriters. I'll go armed with this information to a local supply store which has a big catalog of ribbons for all types of devices and if I don't find Okidata Microline in it, I'll demand justice from a clerk, showing him how this famous pro proves the existence of non-electric ribbons. But I still haven't looked at the Pennsylvania store I mentioned in my last loc. I was in that town a couple of weeks ago but I got distracted by a library book sale where everything was available at the rate of \$2 per large grocery bagfull. My eight selections didn't quite fill the bag so the nice lady told me to take them for \$1.

Of course, I hope the imminent Con†Stellation proves to be a major success. I know of David Weber because his brother

was in SFPA with me, Tom and Anita are, of course familiar to me for their fanzines, but I confess that Allen Steele, Charles Keegan, and Peter Woodward are living evidence of how out of touch I am with the professional aspects of fantasy and science fiction: I couldn't tell anyone a thing about them.

[Perhaps the “laconic mention” you refer to wasn't clear. Anita wasn't going to Memphis *for* a mattress contest but to *train* for a mattress contest. Imagining what is involved in such training is left as an exercise for the reader. As you can see from Sheryl's postcard above the ribbons can be found in your state — whether they completely solve your problem is another matter. -ED]

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Carlo R. DeShouten
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4 November 1999

[Carlo's letter this month is a review of Con†Stellation XVIII -ED]

I had to arrive at the Sheraton Hotel/Airport with Mom (due to no car) because a friend of mine Jack had to pick up someone way deep south from Huntsville. To put it this way it was a 4 hour drive to get there and back. And I'd be screaming mad if I had to wait for Jack. But thank *god* it didn't happen.

Anyway I arrived at the hotel, got to help [...] the con staff set up for the con, and I got my boom box which I played lots of psychedelic/spacerock CDs (How[?]ind, Farflung, P205) along with some from Germany (H[?]stin P[?]ing, Günter Hogen) and also miscellaneous (Pressurehed, Tribe of Cro, Pseudo Sun, etc.) I had a few listeners but sadly not that many. Though very few were interested.

They had the artroom/dealers room which I rated as fair. Although the dealers room had some lots of books, videos, and T-shirts and jewelry. Sadly I didn't find anything interesting. And also sadly I didn't pay attention to the dealers room.

There wasn't a video room this year which was a disappointment. The head of the con said there's not many people watching it and someone had to watch the video room to change and which I understand. But it's something for me to kill time if there's nothing to do.

They have the live-action roleplaying game Ragnarock'n'roll. I don't know [what] the story line was but part of the game had the live rock band Toxic Spleen which they did perform at the concert and I'll tell about that later on.

But I played [the] part [of] a bartender with two young girls that I know very much as a singer and a 12-year old employee which happens to be a test-tube werewolf (which I didn't know about).

A scientist came by to my bar and tried to question my employee. The employee won't go with him because he knows he'll be a test-tube guinea pig again. My employe (Tommy his name) told me he had hormone problems. I yell at him the problem with him is sex and drugs (hee hee). I wouldn't let Tommy go unless I see the scientist credentials. Sure enough he did when all of the sudden a *witch doctor* appeared and was trying to protect the werewolf from the *scientist*. The scientist tried to bribe me with money. However the witch doctor will not budge likely. It was a stand off! The witch doctor pulls out a voodoo doll (of the scientist) with a pin and was preparing to

stab him. The doctor pulled out a 357 magnum. I screamed "My god!! He's got a gun!!!" Then all of the sudden a flash of light appeared (performed by a mysterious super hero) and we were all blinded for a while then my employee was gone. I was so upset I had to chase everyone out of the room. My business is nearly ruined (boo hoo!).

The Toxic Spleen Concert

Friday night was the concert at the dance. Me and some kids were headbanging and dancing to some Ron Zombie music. Then came the band I forgot their name was. But they're similar to Toxic Spleen and they did some cover songs. And they did well until a policewoman came in and told them they're making too much noise. And told them to keep it down so some people could get some sleep. (It's always the same dumb pigs.) After she left, the DJ Wooka had a dedication to the cop "to suck the mid portion of the male human anatomy." I hope she didn't hear that. (Ha ha ha!)

After that an hour later from the edges of the Universe came Toxic Spleen!!! The lead singer was a glam 1940's rocker, a punk mohawk guitar player (no relations to Nik Turner), a Gene Simmons in leather with huge hair (plays guitar), a keyboard gothic stoner and he was "stoned," (technically) a normal drummer, and two go-go dancers and they were hot!!

They were rocking and did some songs like "Meg Ryan's Panties," "I Love Tennis," and "I Ain't Your S.O.B." During the act the evil twin brother (who's an accountant) of the guitar Gene Simmons player beat up his own brother and took over on stage. Fortunately he played like crap. And we can tell he difference and he was finally boot[ed] out.

Then later on another policeman from the intergalactic police told the band to keep the noise down because the planet Venus was trying to get some peace and quiet. But the band played loud and the policeman protested and left.

All in all the music had great punk, metal, and slam sort all in one and these guys know how to throw a party. And I'm told they'll make a CD soon. If so, I'll be ready to get it.

Saturday Towards the Masquerade Contest

Nothing much on Saturday. Even I too am tired from the concert last night. I even turn[ed] down my boom box. But later on the masquerade contest came and there were many costumers. There was the Serena Show which the lovely lady Serena, the psychiatrist Rachel were interviewing an alien on stage. When someone from the stage asked a stupid question and we all shoot the audience and torture that person. Course I helped with the kids and it was fun.

There was also who won best of show. Two demons which I think there name was Zog and Na'Zog, Lords of darkness, destruction, and anarchy! Give them a call!

There was also enchantresses, a female archer, Illinois Jones (who got arrows on his back), a merchant selling duck tape, and that's all I can think of.

Then came a contest of 4 people who can make a costume on stage. Russell a.k.a. Wooka did it like a performance taping and clothing himself as a ninja-like Barbarian. He even taped his arms and legs and won for best costume. In fact he won the show.

Late Night

A few people went upstairs to see the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and I stayed for a while up to Sweet Transvestite.

There were also two room parties. One had a Swashbuckler [theme] party and they did serve some mixed drinks. Course I drank some [...] and I also stayed at the dance and finally went to bed. I had 3-4 hours (each night) of sleep.

In Conclusion

The convention was great as usual. More as a relaxacon. I'm disappointed of them not having a video room. But that's OK. And I definitely will be back next year.

Oh, I almost forgot to put this down. We had a seminar during the con that is about Star Wars and the new movie under fire and why everyone hates it and most people complain of Jar Jar Binx because he's so annoying and should be shot. Personally I prefer to get rid of the kid Ani Skywalker because *he sucks!* He can't act and he doesn't know how to react right. And many people agree there should be better casting. It needed more dramatic scenes and we blame the media for screwing up the movie even though it wasn't advertise. And though some people complained it's a kid's show though I may have to agree but George Lucas needs to work a little harder. Though he did direct. Whether you hate the movie or not. It's up to you.

[Glad you had a good time, Carlo. It certainly seems like *everyone* had a good time this year. And with attendance up a good bit (well over 300 this year) the good feelings were flowing everywhere. You covered many aspects of the con pretty well — well enough that I've decided not to write a con report this year. People who are interested in seeing a little more about the con can check our web site < <http://www.con-stellation.org> >. As I write this there are links to pictures of 15 the masquerade entries plus the 4 entries in the special intermission contest. The plan is to add more features as time goes along. -ED]

EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC

Michael D. Glicksohn
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8 November 1999

When I turned fifty, a group of my friends went in together to buy me a bottle of the 25 year old Macallan. I sipped some that day, as did a few fellow aficionados. In the three and a half years since then I have only opened that crated bottle four or five times, each time because of the death of someone who had meant a great deal to me.

Today I open it again. And when with one hand I press the button that will send this message I'll raise my Cadenhead's scotch-tasting glass with the other and sip a toast to Walt Willis, perhaps the greatest fan to ever grace our microcosm and a man I met often enough to think of as a friend.

So thanks, Walt, for hours of pure reading pleasure and for more inspiration on how to be a fan and a gentleman than you could ever have known you were giving. I feel privileged to have known you, to have shared the pages of fanzines with you, and perhaps to have learned a little about grace and wit and style from you.

You were the best of us and I doubt your like will ever come again.



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