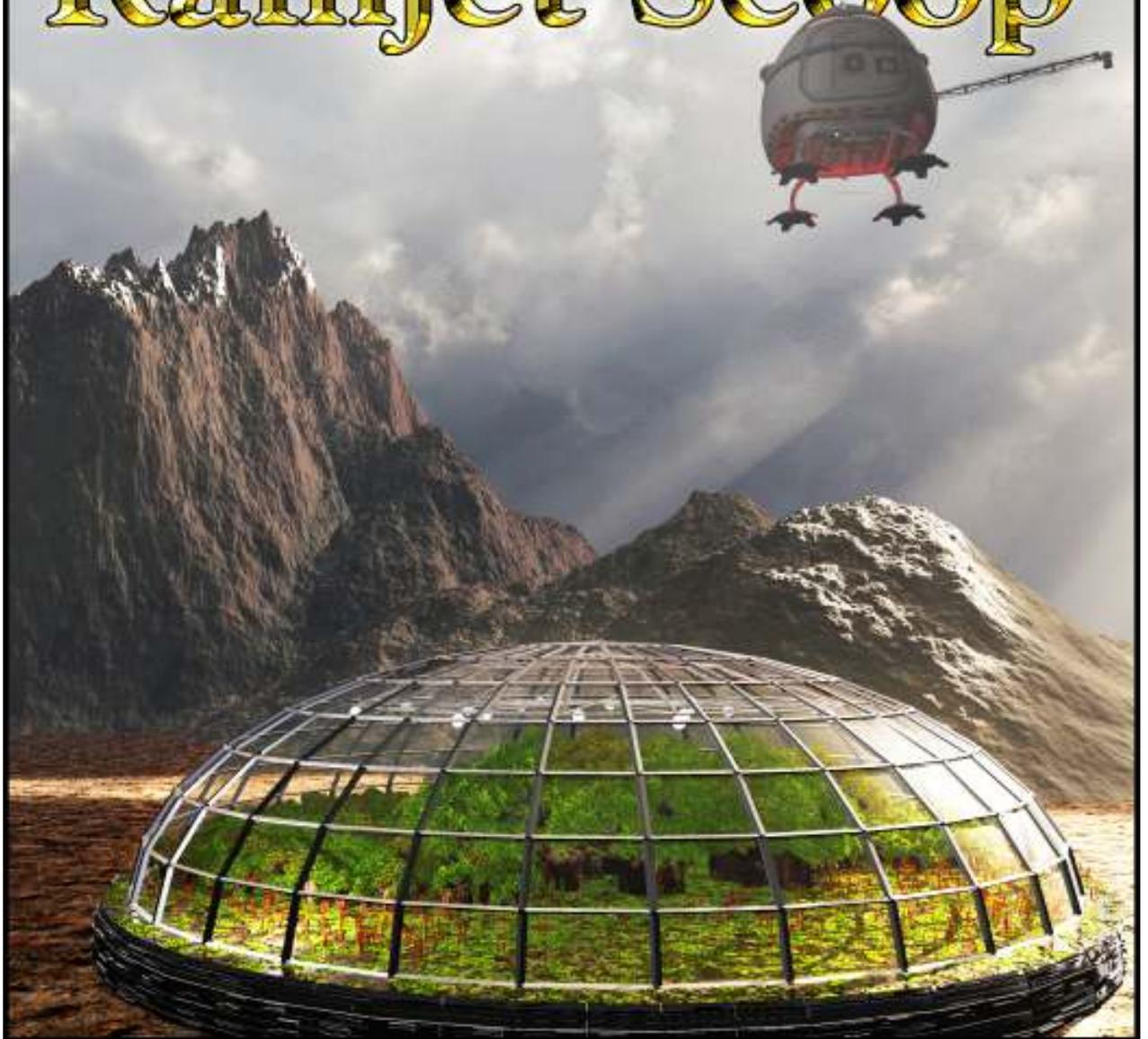


# Interstellar Ramjet Scoop



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BY BILL WRIGHT

UNIT 4, 1 PARK STREET, ST. KILDA WEST, VICTORIA 3182

**THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS**



GRAPHICS BY DITMAR

INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP (THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS)  
PUBLISHED BY BILL WRIGHT, 4/1 PARK STREET, ST. KILDA, VICTORIA 3182

for ANZAPA #245 - October 2008

*"At present we only know that the imagination, like certain wild animals, will not breed in captivity" - George Orwell*

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## This Issue's Cover: Terraforming

*Remember, man also has left his imperishable imprint on his own galaxy. In the process of rejuvenating dead suns, he has lighted fires in the form of novas that will be seen a dozen galaxies away. Planets have been led from their orbits. Dead worlds have come alive with verdure. Oceans now swirl where deserts lay lifeless under suns hotter than Sol. And even our presence here in this great ship is an emanation of man's power, reaching out farther than...(we) have ever been able to go.*

*A. E. van Vogt. **The Voyage of the Space Beagle***

The universe of van Vogt's novel is still many years away – although his optimism would likely have us believe that is probably accomplishable within the next century (and, indeed, the manner in which his protagonists speak and act in the novel is quite contemporary). But to *light novas* and *lead planets away from their suns* is a far journey from our present technology. But every endeavour has a beginning, and the initial attempt at making *dead worlds come alive* is depicted in the cover graphic.

The planet is a desert world – but not because of harsh climatic conditions, nor of an atmosphere unable to blanket the surface from inimical radiation from its sun, nor of the absence of water, nor any other reason apart from the failure of life – any form of life – to have evolved. Such a planet is a prime choice for the testing of terraforming. The dome encloses an early attempt at generating plant life which, theoretically should be capable of self-sustainment.



On the left is a detail of the dome. The vegetation inside comprises bushes of all sizes, trees and grasses.

But what is of the greatest importance, and which is clearly evident, is that the flora has burst the confines of the dome and is overflowing onto its rim – where it is surviving. *The terraforming process is undoubtedly a success.*

What is now necessary, and which should present no problems whatsoever, is to distribute the vegetation on a planetary basis. As the thick clouds in the cover graphic attest, there is an abundance of water available to ensure the rapid spread of the genetically created plant life.

### Technical details

All the imaging was done within *Eon's Vue Infinite 6*. Tweaks were added in Adobe's CS3.

**Ditmar Jenssen**

### Further comment

Ideas of space flight and planetary colonisation lend themselves to poetic imagery. This was especially so in pre-Sputnik times when the manner of going about it was left entirely to the imagination. Arthur C Clarke, in 'The City and the Stars' refers to "*power torn from the hearts of suns.*" A. E. Van Vogt was given to similar hyperbole. His ideas were stranger than Clarke's and, on occasions, not quite politically correct by today's standards – to say the least.

Nonetheless Van Vogt's best stories were rattling good yarns, *The Voyage of the Space Beagle* being no exception.

**Ed.**

## Australia to host world science fiction convention in 2010

The following information was obtained from articles in Melbourne's daily newspaper 'Herald Sun' dated September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and from the national daily 'The Australian' of the same date.

### The world's longest-running science fiction convention will be held in Australia in 2010.



Thousands of science fiction aficionados will make their way to Melbourne in 2010 to attend the 68th World Sci-fi Convention. The annual convention of the World Science Fiction Society, which has affiliations in more than 30 countries, will run for seven days in September 2010 at the Melbourne Convention Centre.

Major Projects Minister Theo Theophanous says the event, known as **Aussiecon 4** is a coup for Melbourne. "This one is a real beauty. This is a big-ship enterprise that has landed one of the biggest conferences in the world," he said.

"Melbourne was chosen to host this event because of its world class Convention Centre, which has already attracted 34 international conventions, bringing nearly 66,100 delegates to Melbourne and worth more than \$350 million to the Victorian economy,"

What Mr Theophanous didn't say (and perhaps should have) is that the billion-dollar Melbourne Convention Centre development, due for completion in the near future, is drawing global attention. Located on the south bank of the Yarra River, it is part of a major revitalisation of the inner city area. The project involves the inclusion of a Hilton Hotel, an array of retail shops including a major home wares centre, an office and residential tower, and the refurbished Maritime Museum - all part of Melbourne's revival as a waterfront city.

**Aussiecon 4** has universal appeal and he's expecting more than 3,000 fans to converge on Melbourne, generating about \$18 million in economic benefit for Victoria. It will include panel discussions on a variety of science fiction subjects, such as technology of the future, writing, publishing, and the philosophical and sociological implications of the genre's works.

SF fans immediately converged on newspaper blogs, posting such comments as,

"Just 3000 fans??? typo or really is that all that they're expecting?" posted by: Darcy 11:55AM Sep 16, 2008.

"Science Fiction Conference. Goody Gum Drops! My favourite Star Wars character is Jsa Jsa Binks! P.S. Red Dwarf Rocks! Cheers." posted by: Cam of Sunny Coast 4:10PM Sep 16, 2008

"I hope the new convention centre can hold more than 3000 because I can see this getting really squishy otherwise!!! \*goes and books his 2010 holiday to Melbourne\*" posted by: Kris of Perth 2:58PM Sep16, 2008

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Visit the Aussiecon 4 website at <http://www.aussiecon4.org.au/>. There, you will find all the useful information you need to know about World Science Fiction Conventions and, most importantly, **Aussiecon 4**. Whether it's the Hugo Awards, International guests, panels or just rubbing shoulders with science fiction fans from all over the world, there is something for everyone at Aussiecon 4.

This is the fourth World Science Fiction convention to be held in Australia, and it is shaping up to be the best. Previous conventions were held in 1975, 1985 and 1999. So what are you waiting for? Membership information is available on the site, and you can even [join](#) up today.

Meteor Incorporated was formed in 2007 to raise funds to set up a permanent science fiction institution and research collection in Australia. Visit its website at <http://www.meteor.org.au> and follow the links.

## Letter from Lloyd Penney

Following is a LoC on e-versions of IRS on [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com) from American fanzine fan Lloyd Penney...

I've got the last couple of issues of Interstellar Ramjet Scoop, the June and August issues, and felt that it's time to join in with Chris Garcia and loc these issues. I promise the best that I can do, as long as you keep uploading them to eFanzines.com

**June**...I always enjoy Ditmar artwork, no matter the subject. The textures and colors always do it for me. Excellent mood piece, indeed.

I find that as our researches become clearer, we find that those people we've credited with inventing something we take for granted may not have been the first to use that technology. Bell may not have invented the telephone, Edison may not have invented the light bulb or the phonograph, Lindbergh may not have been the first to fly across the Atlantic, and there are still people who believe that Columbus discovered America.

I have the Science Fiction Hall of Fame books, four books, three volumes, considering Volumes Two A and Two B. Volume Three was edited by Arthur C. Clarke and George W. Proctor, both of whom unfortunately died fairly recently. The copies I have are in paperback, and are in still fairly good condition.

Creating artificial intelligence is an admirable idea, but I would prefer that we create a lot more naturally-occurring intelligence. There are times that the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence should be supplanted by a search right here at home. No matter where we look, we haven't found signs of intelligence anywhere.

**August**...too many governments now admit that global warming exists, but will do little about it because it might hurt their country's economic output. The bottom line comes before the future of the planet. Short-sightedness will kill us all for sure. I hope I don't need to be as pessimistic as I might sound.

The total energy of the universe is zero? It's good to know that I am in harmony with the universe...ZZZZZ...

I had not read of James Branch Cabell, not thinking that he was perhaps a fantasy writer. I will add his name to my list of authors I must read...no promises made, so none can be broken, but the written word is expanding faster than one can read it.

The buck can stop on George W. Bush's desk all it likes...pretty soon, it won't weigh enough to be affected by gravity, anyway. I did suspect that anything on this continent that calls itself an Australian steak house probably wasn't authentic, but these days anything that has to call itself authentic has to rely on the ignorance of the public.

I would have liked to have seen that presentation on SpaceX by Elon Musk. Over the last number of years, Yvonne and I have been going to space conferences, and we've seen some modern-day, real live wonders. Unfortunately, these space conferences are just as bad as fandom for its politics and SMOF-types. We plan to go to the International Space Development Conference next year in Orlando, Florida, but after that, we may stay with local SF cons. They're not getting any cheaper.

I'm going to fold it up, and we'll see how long it takes to send a paperless letter across the world. I'm sorry I haven't locced your zines before this, but I promise regular responses from now on. Many thanks!

Yours,

*Lloyd Penney*

## Beijing Olympics and the Chinese milk scare

One is moved to compassion for the NBC Dressage commentator at the Beijing Olympics who opined, "*This is really a lovely horse and I speak from personal experience since I once mounted her mother.*"

Just as he probably wishes he hadn't said that, so too might the Chinese leadership reflect that they went overboard in projecting a positive image of the Games. First there was interference from the top when the leadership cadre overruled the local Olympic Committee by substituting a photogenic kid for the plain-faced girl whose voice starred at the opening ceremony. Then the Press Corps was prevented from reporting other than events at the games themselves resulting in news of the brutal repression of protests from Tibet and other frontiers of Han Chinese hegemony being sidelined.

But the worst example, which threatens to overshadow even the Games themselves, is the Chinese Milk Scare that began weeks *before* the Olympics when New Zealand dairy Fonterra (which has a joint venture with China's Sanlu) began pushing for a recall of contaminated mild products in China. The order to delay any action until after the Olympics came from the highest level of government. By then, of course, it was too late and 40,000 babies were hospitalised with life threatening illnesses. Some Chinese press reports have said the contamination scam had been going on for years

## Clerihew corner

Dennis Callegari has come up with one of the cleverest (albeit obscure) clerihews I have seen, in that the two couplets in the rhyme refer to different subjects...

*Though the prideful Greek Archimedes  
Outsmarted the Persians and Medes,  
He was made to look a ditherer  
By Anonymous of Antikythera.*

Historical references in the first couplet are clear enough.



When, in 212 BC, Syracuse faced an attack from the Romans, they turned to the local physicist, mathematician and engineer **Archimedes**. According to legend he developed a Death Ray as a means of halting the approaching Roman naval fleet.

Archimedes instructed the soldiers of Syracuse to polish their shields until they shone like mirrors. They were then positioned along the coast of the island, facing the incoming Roman navy. The sun was reflected off of the many shields onto Roman ships, causing them to burst into flames and thus ending the Roman advance.

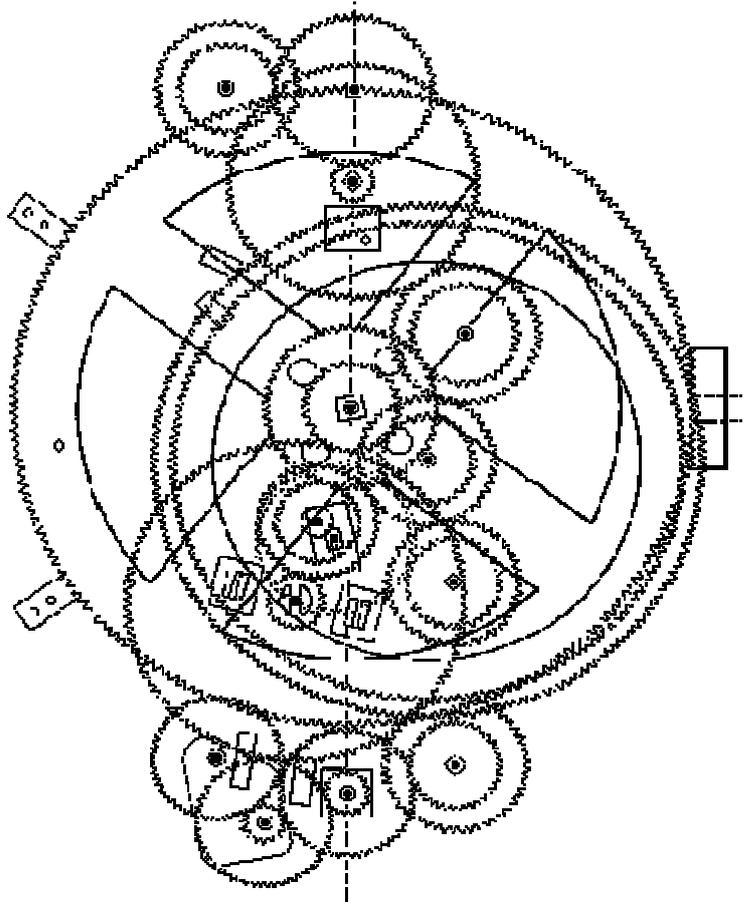
The second couplet is more obscure, in that hours of diligent research were required to unravel it.

In 1900 a Greek sponge diver working about thirty metres from the shore of the small Greek island of Antikythera

[pronounce it with the accent on the 'ky' syllable – it's an absolutely magic name]

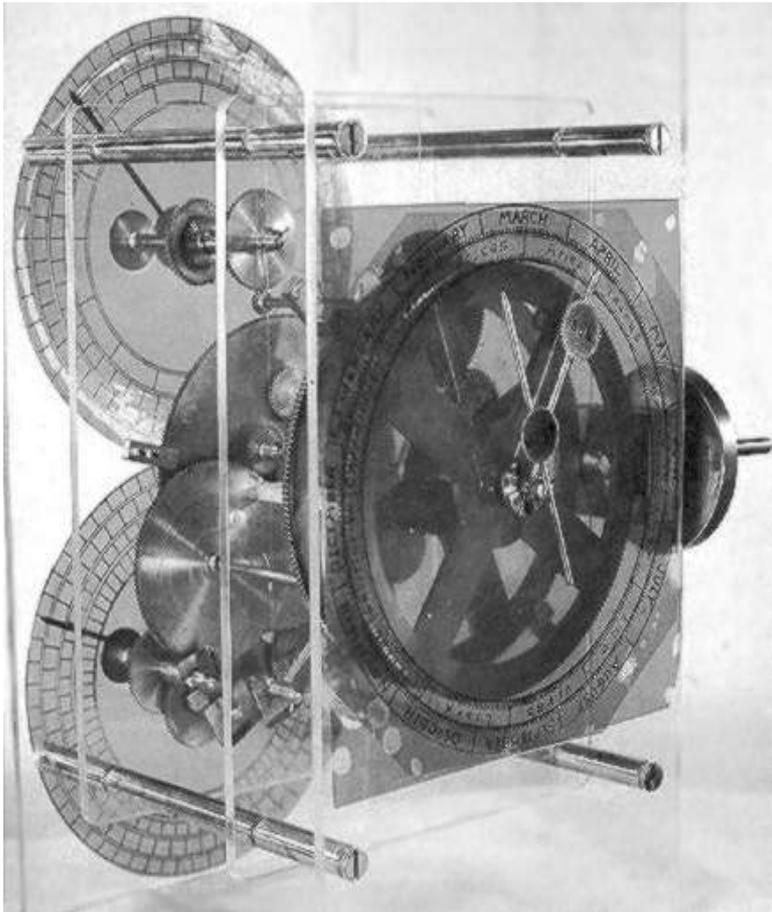
discovered the wreck of a cargo ship laden with artefacts of antiquity including jewellery, pottery, fine furniture, wine and bronzes dating back to the first century BC; but the most important find proved to be a few green, corroded lumps—the last remnants of an elaborate mechanical device. Now known as the *Antikythera device*, it represents the most sophisticated machinery found to date from antiquity.

The parts found contain 32 gears, including use of a differential gear to subtract the sidereal motion of the sun from that of the moon to produce the synodic month (the cycle of the phases of the moon). The full functions of the mechanism may never be known but it appears certain that it displayed the position of the sun in the zodiac throughout the year as well as the phases of the moon.



As such it can be considered as one of the first known computing devices. Rob S Price, in his paper presented at the eleventh Naval History Symposium in 1974, speculated that it may also have displayed the positions of the planets as well, though the gearing required to do this is missing from the fragments that were recovered.

Price also comments that there are people who would rather attribute the creation of the mechanism to visiting alien astronauts rather than accept that our forbears possessed the technical knowledge and engineering ability to design and construct such a complex device over two-thousand years ago.



It is estimated that the device was built between 150 and 100 BC, which is well after the time of Archimedes of Syracuse (287 – 212 BC) who is also reputed to have built Planetaria, although the sophistication of this device employs concepts far beyond those formulated by Archimedes.

Some historians consider that it could have been produced in Rhodes which was considered technological advanced and had the knowledge supported by scientists like Hipparchus or Posidonius from Rhodes. Also, machines like the repeating catapult of Dionysius were products from Rhodes.

Although Price, for example, links the device with Geminus from Rhodes, nobody knows for sure who invented it. It might, indeed, have been developed out of the collective genius of a School.

At left is a photograph of a reconstruction of the Antikythera mechanism at the Augarten Palace complex in Vienna.

The Antikythera computing device is the most complex instrument of antiquity. Its astonishing sophistication and lack of historical precedent has puzzled and will continue to confound scientists and savants alike.

Pedants might criticise Dennis for implying in his clerihew that the machine was from Antikythera, although it was most likely from some place else – probably Rhodes; but the couplet is clever and I hope that inquisitive readers of IRS enjoy it as much as its editor does.

-----

In 2005 Dennis created a number of clerihews on British Prime Ministers. I was able to find only two of them when my interest was piqued by the recent posting of an advertisement on the BBC website for a podcast of the children's spy drama, 'The Sinister Prime Minister' \* regrettably available only in the U.K.

The two clerihews are...

Clement Attlee's  
 Penchant for philately.  
 Was, as a hobby, rather camp  
 For a man of his stamp.

William Pitt the Younger  
 Had a mighty power hunger  
 (Nothing very sinister  
 In a British ex-Prime Minister).

\* 'The Sinister Prime Minister' children's spy drama: *MI9 become suspicious when Britain's famously peace-loving Prime Minister declares World War III. Daisy goes undercover and discovers that the Prime Minister has been replaced by a cyber-clone. The evil Grand Master is in cahoots with the disgraced scientist, Guinea-pig. Together they are using the fake Prime Minister to seize control of Britain. Can the divided team come together to defeat the cyber-clone and stop the war?*

Eighteenth century politics were as intense as the modern-day variety but children of the day were more concerned with the brutal realities of survival than with the preoccupations of their elders. One wonders, though, what British kids today think of their national leaders when their perceptions are coloured by such fare. Mind you, I have sometimes wondered if Dick Cheney is a cyber clone. He terrifies adults, so one can only speculate on his effect on impressionable American kids. 'Sinister Prime Minister' might not be so far fetched after all.

*Dennis Callegari as interpreted by Bill Wright*

## A vision of Yarra Beach vs the reality of St Kilda Harbour

The daily grind of survival is mired in dismal politics; so it's refreshing when a civic leader hits on an issue that fires public imagination. The otherwise unremarkable Councillor Fiona Sneddon has come up with an idea for a beach on the south bank of the River Yarra, east of Melbourne's city centre. Below are current views of the area being considered, with Princes Bridge and the city skyline in the background.



A young couple are relaxing on the boardwalk that covers a gently sloping river bank for half the length of the proposed sand beach. Closer to the city, the river frontage to the Royal Botanical Gardens has a steeper gradient but entertainment facilities at Flinders Park constitute a more pleasing across-the-water vista.

The main argument against going to the enormous expense of creating an artificial sand beach a mile from the mouth of a sluggish river is that no-one would dare take a swim there, given that the Yarra acts as a drainage system for the Metropolis. Greater Melbourne has a population of four million people living near hundreds of kilometres of bay beaches in various stages of disrepair. It would be better, the argument runs, to look to the ecological health of the river (and of Port Phillip Bay) than to fritter away funds on such follies.

Yet there is something splendid about the concept and its implications. In order to realise Cr Sneddon's dream, the public would have to commit to tax-funding the cleansing of the Yarra River, the reestablishment of mangrove swamps around the bay's perimeter and the refurbishment of its beaches for public recreation.

The City of Port Phillip has made a start with its private-equity-funded redevelopment of the 'Triangle' area between Luna Park and St Kilda Pier in the face of thuggish opposition from a small group of residents that, King Canute like, seeks to stem the tide of visitors to the area.

Now the Victorian State Government has weighed in with a plan for St Kilda Harbour, which is the redevelopment of the bay side from the Pier through the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron to a section of coast line under reclamation including derelict concrete changing sheds with commercial potential.

Together, the Triangle and St Kilda Harbour developments will have a significant impact on the amenity of the precinct. They will treble the capacity of the area to cater for hoards of local, interstate and international visitors and will revitalise the St Kilda Beach recreation area with a raft of amenities such as an ice skating rink, ferries transporting commuters up river and



across the bay, pontoons for public boating, sunning and swimming from a board walk around an enclosed swimming area (part of the Pier redevelopment) and significant improvements in the quality and quantity of public-access beach sand and parkland, including deck chairs, allowing for the service of food and drinks.

My proposal for the installation of *Segway Personal Transporter* depots enabling revellers to get around the precinct without having to walk all the way was vetoed by the rozzers, who fear (with justification) having to police alcohol and drug fuelled revellers who are more mobile than they are.

**Bill Wright**

## Stefan Zone

### MY TAXES AT WORK + THE OLYMPIC GAMES

August 2008 saw the Australian invasion of China. Well, it seemed that way with Australia sending one of the largest tax-funded Olympic teams to the Beijing games, along with their support teams, families, supporters, government officials, commentators and a fair number of politicians (all, apparently on 'fact finding' missions). No wonder the trains were less crowded than normal. Apparently the Australian Olympic team is now bigger than the Australian Army.

I suppose if my tax dollars weren't spent on sports people, they would be spent on drugs for druggies; more government committees to watch prices rise or to bail out people who have lost millions in risky investments while chasing 50 % returns. Maybe I can get Chairman Krudd to sponsor me on a train spotting tour of the world. If I sell this the right way, I won't ever have to work again. I'll just live off the Taxpayer, whoever he is, the poor fool. Oh, that's right, I'm the taxpayer.

If you missed the Opening Ceremony, err, ceremony, you can see it again on Stefan TV. Two people watched it live in Melbourne, one in Sydney and one in the rest of Australia, so that makes for a total audience of, gosh 10.9 million Australians, more than tuned into Channel 7. For your benefit, I've had the Chinese commentary translated from a mandarin to English via the Internet. Haven't had a chance to fix all the L / R issues.

*"Hurro an wercome to Beijing Orympic Games. Ai your host, Chairman Krudd, an wi me is javerin nose ... err... javerin champion, Juria Girrard."*

*"It was onry two day ago that the secrets of Orympic Games opening celemony were revealed by our vely own No Pee King. Who wourd have guessed that there wourd have been fire works?"*

**(fast forward to teams)**

*"First to march into arena is China, red by their tanks."*

**(fast forward 5 minutes)**

*"The next team is Austlaria. Wai no gleen and gord uniforms?"*

*"Gleen corour arr used up by envilontar groups. Gord arr mined out of glound."*

*"They are red out by Andrew A'Picture followed by Anita Appearance."*

**(fast forward 30 minutes)**

*"Next we have Donna Hatandcoat, one of 200 competing in the 50 metre freestyle"*

**(fast forward 30 minutes)**

*"... Mal Content, the Austrarian motivationar speaker, forrowed by Mal Practice, the Austrarian barrister."*

**(fast forward 1 hour)**

*"And still they arrive. Next we see Hal Atosis, one of 50 contending the Ping Pong."*

**(fast forward 2 hours)**

*"The arena full, but Austrarians are stirr moving in. They starting to doubre stack them to make loom. Here we see Peter Out, the rong distance lunner"*

**(fast forward 5 hours)**

*"The finar Austrarian is rowered into the arena by hericopter - Zou Logical, the wrestrer."*

*"Now no more room for other teams. Austrarians win !"*

Game Over

### LATEST AFL TEAM

Zorba the Greek has been pushing for an AFL team to be located in Queensland for some time now. It seems his dreams will be fulfilled with the Gold Coast D's kicking off from next year.

The Gold Coast D's (Or Druggies, Drunks and Deadheads) won't need to recruit any players - there will be enough for 2 teams once the other AFL clubs transfer the likes of Brendan Fevola, Chris Tarrant, Ben Johnson, Alan Didak, Ben Cousins, Barry Hall and Heath Shaw to the new team. In fact, teams such as Collingwood and

West Coast will need to recruit some more players once they lose up to 30 % of their team to the Gold Coast.

It won't be only players heading North to join the new team. John Elliott will dust off his nose for a shot at President, but he'll be up against Dick Pratt for that role; Tony Liberatore will be coach, although his claims of tanking will take on new meaning (possibly keggering might be a better description). The role of club doctor would have to go to Dr Geoffrey Edelsten.

Financial backing may have to come from the likes of Mick Gatto if the large New Zealander and dole bludging population up north doesn't sign up for club membership. As part of their Membership, members will receive a showbag full of beer, stubby holders, drugs and knuckledusters as well as tokens for free towing from accidents and 5 % off lawyer fees.

Seeing as how many of the players have 'misunderstandings' with the law, it is only right they have full-time legal representation, so Zarah Garde-Wilson will also have to pack her 'lawyer' attire and start a new career up north.

### THE ALTERNATIVE BEIJING CLOSING CEREMONY

Well, the Olympics has been and gone, quickly swallowed up by the Beijing 'non-smog' and the torch was passed on to the English. However, there was an alternate ending to the closing ceremony. Here's another Stefan Exclusive:

... And as we wrap up the Chinese portion of the closing ceremony, we see a selection of Australian companies, taken over by the Chinese in the past 10 years, slowly fade away into the smog.

Now it's time for the Chinese Olympic committee to hand over the Olympic torch to the English Olympic committee, but just as they do so, a thug snatches the torch and disappears into the crowd. Athletes from other countries look horrified, but the English just shrug their shoulders.

A cavalcade of London double-decker buses drives onto the arena, showcasing the best England has to offer. First up is 'Teenage mums not on Welfare', followed by 'The Newspaper that

The AFL is in negotiation with Ford and Holden in coming up with a safe car for these players to drive. Dodgem cars were suggested, but a car made of rubber and involving bubble wrap now seems to be the main contender.

Club officials have already said that the Hall of Fame at the new club will be replaced with their very own Hall of Shame. They're already petitioning the AFL to increase the size of the benches so their players can take turns in sleeping off the effects of the night before the game during the match.

It will make for an interesting 2009 for the AFL.

has never printed an exclusive story on the Royals'...

Here's the English cricket team strolling around the stadium. Someone throws them a ball and, oh, they've dropped it. Recriminations fly backwards and forwards and the coach gets the sack...

The party continues on in earnest here. Someone brings out a soccer ball to kick around. Oh, the fools. Officials quickly step in to take the ball away, but it's too late. Here come the English soccer thugs, armed with pipes and bricks, weaving their way through the Beijing smog and creating havoc. Athletes and spectators alike flee the arena, pursued by the soccer hooligans.

Just as a thick London smog (specially flown in) descends on the stadium, a lone bobby strolls onto the arena, swinging his baton and stepping around bodies and over the wreckage.

*"'Ello, 'Ello. Wots goin' on 'ere, then?"*

### EGGHEADS BEING EGGHEADS

I've been closely monitoring the situation from France on the outcome of the Large Hadron Collider experiment, or Le Bange De Bigge as they call it over there. So far the planet hasn't disappeared, but there's plenty of time for that to occur in the coming weeks.

Apparently the scientists have been building this doomsday device for the past 20 or so years. They've kept that very quiet, haven't they. At a final cost of some \$6.6 billion, which in scientific experiment circles is just the spare housekeeping money, the device certainly wasn't anything some kid could knock up with a Dick Smith's mini inventor kit and scrap metal.

They certainly kept the news of this experiment quiet. It wasn't until they were almost ready to push the button that a few of them suddenly realised there was a slight chance of stuffing up big time and creating a black hole that would gobble the planet quicker than a Labour government gobbles up a surplus. By the time this little fact was known, it was too late. I mean, they went to all that effort, there's thousands of them in white coats hanging around, gosh, just let them push the button, just this once.

In the future (if there is to be one), they will just write it off as eggheads being eggheads.

Gosh, if money was a problem for them two decades ago, all they needed to do was to go out

and fundraise. If an egghead boffin turned up at our door asking for a donation for this device and mentioned there was a slight chance that it would make France disappear, we certainly would have given some money. I reckon they would have pretty much covered their target by collecting in our neighbourhood alone.

According to today's Herald Sun, one physicist was quoted as saying "It's about acquiring knowledge for humanity about the behaviour of fundamental matter." Translation: "It's about being an egghead." As if cloning wasn't enough. In today's society, where play equipment is being banned at schools for fear of parents suing if

someone breaks an arm, we allow eggheads to perform experiments that could make us disappear up our own black holes !

The worst part is they haven't even got to the experiment stage. Yesterday's firing was just a test run. In the coming weeks, they will attempt to collide two protons together and hope for the best. I'm sure they could have got the same results if someone bashed two of these eggheads' heads together.

It certainly could have been done at a much smaller price.

### MORE??? You want MORE???

An ALP MP (who else) started a tsunami of calls to talkback radio and countless letters to editors this week after he complained about the small size of a serving of Beef Stroganoff at Parliament House. Apparently his wife wasn't too happy and got him to complain during Parliament chit-chat time. (No, her name wasn't Belinda Neal). The vast forces of Parliament were rallied and yet another Committee was assigned (Stroganoff Watch, I think they called it).

Upon hearing the complaint about the subsidised Stroganoff, Pensioners mobilised in their tens of thousands. By the end of the day, a few had finally struggled to the phone or to their writing desk, only to forget why they had gone there.

Lucky it was Stroganoff and not the Caviar portions and grog servings they were complaining about, else all heck would have broken loose.

Pensioners are so poor these days. (How poor?) They're so poor that they have to share dentures at mealtimes. They're so poor that their last square meal was a stock cube. They're so poor that they make a meal out of food stuck between their teeth.

They're even so poor that many can no longer afford free things. That's how desperate things have become. I've heard pensioners time and

time again say: "At my age, I can't afford to have a cold." We're talking about the Common Cold here. Everyone seems to get it each year, but for pensioners, it's just a dream. They can't even afford it on some lay-by or time-share arrangement.

This isn't the first time that the ALP has felt the full force of Grey Power. Back in the days of Mr Water Works (Bob Hawke), they rallied after he called one of them a "Silly old b@gger". The scandal didn't die down until the next pension increase came through.

The timing of this latest scandal couldn't come at a worse time for pensioners, after they have already watched their retirement nest eggs shrinking from the size of an emu's egg to that of a mosquito's. And this was just the result of the last two day's stock market trade. At this rate, they have deferred retirement for this lifetime and possibly for most of the next as well.

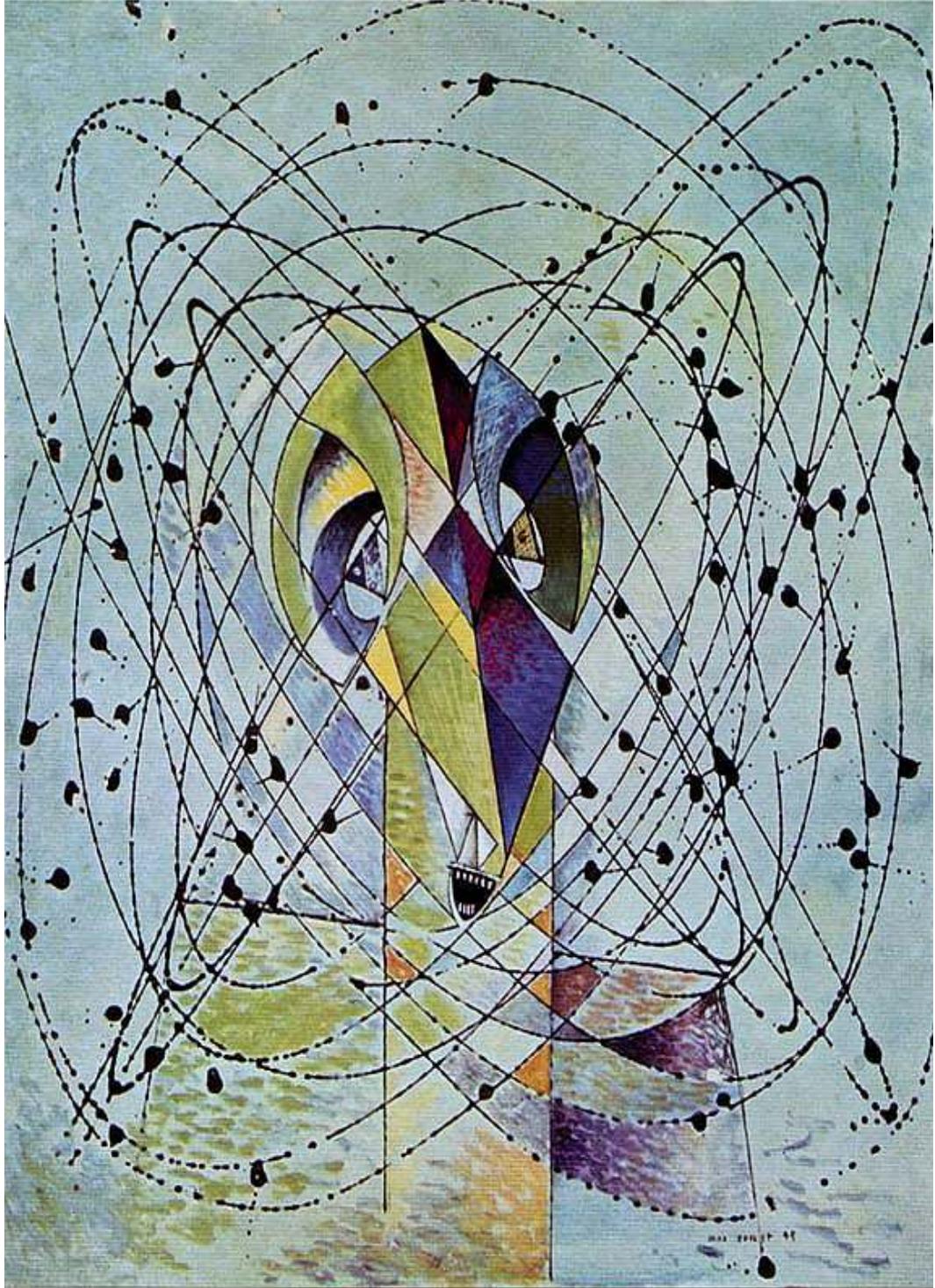
All this talk of food has made me somewhat hungry. I could do with a good sized Stroganoff Watch, topped off with Grocery Watch and washed down by Fuel Watch. I just hope the Chicken Parma hasn't suffered through all of this

*Stefan*



## Dada vs Euclid – prelude to postmodernism

a painting by Max Ernst (1891–1976)  
from the book *Surrealism* by Patrick Waldberg, published by Skira (1962)



MAX ERNST (1891). MAN'S HEAD PUZZLED BY THE FLIGHT  
OF A NON-EUCLIDEAN FLY, 1947. PRIVATE COLLECTION, ZURICH.