

The following is an edited version of the Fan Guest of Honour speech that I gave at Conjunction, the 2008 New Zealand National Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror convention at the then Copthorne Hotel Wellington New Zealand – Easter 2008.

Andrew Ivamy - Fan GoH @ **Conjunction** NZ Natcon Easter 2008 Wellington NZ

Madam Chairs; Guests of Honour & their partners; Fans one and all!

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT.

My Father was brought into the delivery room where I had just been born. Looking around at the gathered doctors and nurses my father supposed to himself that he had better say something intelligent, witty and above all humorous: “Look at those hands and feet how large they are, he can’t be mine!” My father exclaimed. And so I was cursed with uttering bad puns and speaking inappropriately at the wrong time.

I was born in a small town in country Queensland called Stanthorpe some 41 years ago. My Parents has lived and worked in a number of country towns ending up in Brisbane around the time I was three years of age. I have very fragmented memories of the time before commencing school. I remember running across a field in Stanthorpe which no doubt was just the tall grass of the back yard. Journeying to hospital as an 11 month old to see my new born sister Lorrilee is perhaps my earliest memory, but apart from Lorrilee falling down the back stairs, my brothers birth , being carried half asleep by my father and a few other memories, I remember little more.

My sister Lorrilee however remembers the Moon landing of July 1969 despite being less than 18months old. O am told that I rode both the Brisbane trams and the suburban steam trains which both ceased service that same year.

My first year of schooling was 1973, we used chalk and slate and quickly learnt to use “pens” shafts of wood with a metal prong tip that you dip into an ink well & write carefully on a page. All this barely two miles from Brisbane’s town hall who’s clock towers chimes we could hear strike the hour.

My family had moved to the inner suburb of Milton in the months immediately prior to my commencing Grade 1. It was cheep and for the most part reasonably affordable and until a week before the commencement of the school year both Lorrilee and I were to start in the same grade as our births fell in the same band for enrolment. However, the then principal at the last minute disallowed Lorrilee being enrolled so she had to wait a full 12 months alone.

I was also alone in the context of going to school, but made friends easily. My Parents were practising Seventh Day Adventists. We believed in God, went to church on Saturday and observed the Sabbath from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday. It never bothered us that other religions went to church on Sunday after all, we were all Christians.

Being an inner city suburb of the mid 1970’s, Milton, Paddington and Red Hill housed numerous workers cottages with recently arrived migrant families, retired workers who it seemed were as old as their homes and also Aborigines.

We weren’t bothered by the aborigines near us, we had a few in our school and as I said before we were a fairly multicultural mix of recent immigrants and those from the mother country. Before moving one suburb from Red Hill to Milton a number of things happened that would have an impact on me – my first recollection of TV was the Olympics on a small Black and White TV set. The Olympics were in a place called Munich, but the relevance of those games would allude me for more than a decade. Colour Television came to Australia in 1975 and my father traded with a TV company for his services supplying office supplies for a colour television. It was a hideous thing that was constantly being repaired. We three children got to know the TV repairman such was the frequency of his call outs to repair the TV.

In the 1950's Sommerset Dam was built as a means of supplying drinking water and also flood mitigation. Brisbane had flooded a number of times in the 1890's and to a minor extent a half dozen times in the 60 or so years following.

Cyclone David filled Sommerset Dam in 1972 so when Cyclone Wanda formed in January 1974, the stage was set for Brisbane's largest peacetime disaster.

Cyclone Wanda crossed the coast north of Brisbane dumping months worth of rain in the Brisbane Valley the upper reaches of the Brisbane River. Cyclone Wanda followed the Brisbane Valley flooding Ipswich and descending on Brisbane. It has to be remembered that this cyclone didn't just dump months worth of rain every day for a week just on Brisbane. The Sunshine Coast, Gympie and as far as Maryborough 300 klms to the North, the Gold Coast, Lismore and Grafton 400 klms to the South and as far West as Toowoomba almost 150 klms inland at the foot of the Great Dividing Range were all inundated with flooding rain.

With Sommerset Dam full and the very real danger of the dam collapsing, Brisbane's river burst its banks and the suburbs flooded. Whole streets or homes were washed away. My Father and another member of Civil Defence Hank Horshner decided to begin evacuating homes. They had no authority to do so, their goal in the civil defence was more akin to evacuation in the event of a land war or nuclear attack, yet they decided none the less to evacuate homes. The first were on Baroona Road at Rosalie across the road from Gregory Park where Milton Primary School still stands. The only view of the floods I saw was from the top Heusler Terrace looking down the hill at the intersection with Baroona Road. The corner store was already up to the gutter of its awning underwater.

After a week or so of evacuation, we, my sister, brother and I were moved to some sort of shelter run by Catholic Nuns. The sun was out and there are surreal images of Brisbane's CBD underwater with blue skies above – like a post apocalyptic movie which in some senses it was. While in the care of the nuns, our children played carefree on the swings and slides. A little too carefree as I would discover managing to break my left leg on one of the wooden swings. The nuns thought I was faking my injuries and dragged me to the side of the play area then left me there for a while. I woke and it was dark, I limped to the toilet and back to my bed – the nuns saw this I know. I was told to go back to bed. Another day and night of my sleeping waking momentarily then sleeping again. It was only when I limped to the toilet a second time did the nuns decide that my leg dragging behind me might actually be broken.

I had a full leg cast, my leg having been broken in three places: the upper, lower and foot bones. Even now thirty mumble years later, my foot will swell due to the capillaries not having healed properly. My father meanwhile had collapsed from exhaustion evacuating people all over Brisbane. He has great yarns of Hank Horshner wanting to sink the Robert Miller in the middle of the Brisbane River as it had come adrift and how they commandeered a train at Sherwood to use in the evacuations. Neither of us knew the other had taken a turn for the worst until I was taken to see my dad in Hospital. Years later at work, one of the guards I was working with recounted a story he'd heard of the flood about a woman who'd wrapped wet clothes around her body to dry them for her children to wear.

"Yes." I replied immediately, "That was my mother." The guard at work hadn't expected this answer and went into a tirade, I just shrugged my shoulders. "I can't help it if I've had a more exciting life."

When the cast was removed, I was told to drink plenty of milk to help my bones grow and that I'll never get another broken leg. And you know? He was right. I've had a broken collarbone and a broken arm (the latter in the car accident with Norman, Maree and Matthew), but, I've never had another broken leg!

I put an umbrella tip through the same foot and have a scar to boot. I was twirling the umbrella like Charlie Chaplain and was told to put the umbrella down, so I did with a stab into what I thought was the ground. For

a few years after the leg breaking, I wasn't interested in sports but swimming and a few years later running (more specifically) cross country running appealed to me. All 5 years of high school I went to the state Cross Country Championships in Queens Park in Ipswich.

My second year of schooling was a very difficult one. It started with a broken leg, I was stabbed and have a scar above one eye as well as a small piece of ear missing. I was punched in the head by a relief teacher and at years end, contracted Scarlet Fever and spent a while in Hospital. The Doctors in those days had no bedside-manner, a group came to see me and they discussed something. I asked what they were discussing and was told "Don't worry, you're probably going to die tonight anyway." and went back to their discussions. I lay awake all night in fear. On and off since, I will have periods where I will wake with a start thinking I am or have died in my sleep.

After having been punched unconscious by a relief teacher, a change in attitude towards me began, both the teachers and other students saw me as something to ridicule and I found it became harder and harder to make new friends. I got myself a paper run in grade 5 and made myself some serious money. I was able to buy books from the schools book club as well as my first comic collection – Richie Rich. I was fascinated by Richie's lifestyle; the girlfriend Gloria Glad, the Butler Cadbury and his pet dog Dollar with the famous dollar sign spots.

One of Richie's good friends was Jackie Jokers and together they starred in a Star Wars parody at the time the first movie came out. From the moment I heard the name Star Wars, I, like almost everyone else made the Star Trek/ Star Wars comparison which continues to the day. I was stunned to learn – you're all seen the Star Wars movies right? I was stunned to learn that *Darth Vader is Luke Skywalker's father...*

(pause for gasps from the audience)

... and more stunned to learn Luke and Princess Leah are brother and sister. (You don't wanna know what I thought Han solo was thinking when he learnt from Leia the same thing)... (pulls sour face)

In Grade 6 I did something wrong. I can't remember what and was grounded for a day. At the end of the day I was grounded for a week. At the end of the week I was grounded for a month and as you may have guessed, I was grounded for a year. A whole year.

13 months, 1 week and a day of my childhood where I was made to sit at home and do nothing. I lost a lot of motivation and interest in doing things. I wouldn't say that I am lazy, I simply don't have the motivation to go out and do things. It was during this time that I ventured into the cupboard of my L shaped room. I never fully knew if the books I found there were my parents or my Uncle Tony's, but I read a few of them. The one that stands out in my mind to this day was *The Corridors of Time* by Pohl Anderson. I soaked up this book – time travel – alternate endings.. "What ifs?"

The books of the book club suddenly were quite ordinary and I hunted out the schools library to no avail. By now I was prolifically watching TV shows – Gilligans Island, Hogan's Heroes... Get Smart. I fancied that I were "Maxwell Smart, secret agent 86." Looking for his 99. There was "Land of the Giants, Supertrain, and the three most important shows ever: Space 1999, Time Tunnel & The Thunderbirds.

I could spend more hours than would be normal going through the many TV shows and cartoons and why I found them so absorbing, but I will home in on the Thunderbirds because I believe it to be the most Future Accurate show ever.

Terrorists from Middle Eastern countries have banded together to reign terror on the Western World. With jet powered planes they terrorise the skies while on the ground one man terror squads blow up buildings and

instillations. One world governments can't police these actions hence the need for an organisation to launch *International Rescues* around the world. **Thunderbirds are GO!**

1980 – High school was all too soon upon me. New Television shows were upon us. In August of 1980, five words would change my life. “A Dingo’s got my baby!” After countless searches, media hounding botched forensic investigation and too many court sittings Pastor Michael & Lindy Chamberlin were first convicted of the murder of their daughter Azaria then their convictions were overturned and a final coronal investigation determined that baby Azaria had been taken from the tent by a dingo and that by unknown means the infants remains had been disposed of in an unknown manor.

Michael & Lindy did not kill their daughter, the Seventh day Adventists who’s church I was raised in do not make human sacrifices (and if you know your bible, you’d know why). But, the damage had been done.

The churches ministry took the view that it was a holy war to be fought against the media. Within weeks if you held this belief you attended church in one suburb, if you didn’t you attended church in another suburb. My parents didn’t want to take sides and so we were kept at home on the Sabbath – the Saturday, the 7th day.

Practising 7th day Adventists are predominantly vegetarians. I say predominantly as my Mother and Sister are vegetarians while my Father, Brother and I are meat eaters. For quite a while I would be mesmerised if I saw a woman eating meat.

The 1980’s all at once brought Punks, New Wave, New Romantics, Fluro’s, Pastels... the choices were mind boggling. Movies and television were becoming sophisticated – Prisoners wobbly brick walls were disappearing the same way countless other shows wobbly rocks and walls went. British TV shows – Blake’s 7, The Tomorrow People, The Persuaders, Professionals and the Champions replaced American Fair – Quincy M.E., Emergency, Chips and the like.

I never saw such shows as The Avengers, or even Blake’s 7 I mention them as they were screened on a Friday evening and as it was the Sabbath (sun down Friday to Sundown Saturday), I was not allowed to watch those programs. Both Lorrilee and David were however and so I never saw Blake, Garth Avon, Carry and Villa create subterfuge against the Federation.

I did however watch Doctor Who.

1981 – Lorrilee joined the Moreton Bay Morris Dancing team.

1982 – I joined Moreton Bay Morris and then joined the Queensland Star Trekkers – Quest.

1983 – There was an advertisement for a Fan Zine called The Alternative Factor. Writers included Lana Brown, Gammin Davis, Margaret Boyd, Judith Yeatman and one Phillip Ivamy. I wrote to the editor Julie Stigter and joined their group immediately.

1984 – My last year of high school. I was spooked by the book of the same name and sat an entrance exam for the Locomotive Cleaner with the Queensland Government Railways. I was regularly writing to Julie in the far away land of Dunedin and asked if they have conventions there, not in 1985 as I’d have to get a job and work for a year before taking holidays, but rather in 1986, to which I got a reply, “Yes, we do have conventions. The convention in 1986 will be called Halleycon.”

And so, I worked for a year as an Engine (locomotive) Cleaner got an Australian Visa in my British Passport and on the 27th of May, 1986 flew to Christchurch with my sister Lorrilee. We were met at the airport by Lindsay Thompson who was partnered with Jenna O’Rourke in those days. A railway carriage had been

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eFanzines contribution 005
11th June, 2017

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organised for the trip to Dunedin. The night before the rail trip the NZRR and Ferry staff went out on strike and so at various times in the evening Keith Smith, Dave White, Frank MacSkasey and Felicity Black turned up. We met John Knight, Connor and co. On the train I met Lana Brown and many others. In Dunedin we were met at the railway station by Rex Thompson & Pauline Menung who helped ferry the 50 or so on the train to the Saint George Hotel. (Saint George in the middle of a Scottish Town – go figure)

There were many others there Camilla Owen, Dan and Evan McCarthy. I got a photo of a woman in a unit outfit with a baby in her arms dressed as the 6th Doctor. Ruth McCarthy and Louis Stanfield's now 20 something year old son David.

There were other noticeable I met including Pauline Butler and Aaron Nicholson, Dion, and even a bearded Tim Jones.

Oh, and there was one other person I met at the convention, she had a small scarf, golden hair and was sprouting on about a book: *Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass* from the book *Road Marks* by **Rodger Zelazney**.

On our return to Christchurch Via Invercargill and before venturing on to Nelson, Lorrilee and I ended up at the Smeaton Family home – 33 Twyford Street Bishopdale where I met Lisa Strickland.

The talk on the night was... *Slash*...

There'd been a preview showing of Labrynth and I have a photo of Scarf unravelled down the length of a railway carriage and also a row of seats in the now long gone cinema in Christchurch.

I know I met Charles Finn and Barbara Lintot around this time too.

After an interisland crossing where the ships horn was stuck on for two hours (and the engineer couldn't be found) Lorrilee and I arrived in Wellington and stayed with Frank macSkasey. Frank regaled us with tales of conspiracy theories and the assination of JFK and how easy it is in New Zealand to get a birth certificate of a dead baby – part of the premise of "The Jackals" assination of De Gaul. Lorrilee decided to stay on in Wellington while I travelled to Auckland on the Silver Fern alone. Lorrilee joined the Magilicuddy Serious Party and Alf Imperial Army. A few years later K.A.O.S. was played a Natcon – my target was Tina Nevin whom I'm related to while her target was Maree Sole. Maree was taken out by a bomb in the earpiece of her phone.

Natcon Guests: I won't dwell on Natcon Guests too much; the stories are out there already. Craig Harrison and his "friend" didn't cope with SF Fans Barbara Hambly scowled continuously until I made her smirked with an off the cuff comment that I was in big trouble after she'd berated friends of hers who have wall to wall, floor to ceiling newspapers.

Danny Jon Jules was everything you could hope for in a media guest while Joe Haldeman was everything you could hope for in a literary SF guest. Meeting Joe Haldeman not once, but twice was a true privilege.

Orson Scott Card could be interesting when he wasn't being rubbed by local fen the wrong way about his support for George Walker Bush.

(Paragraph about Sean mc Mullens omitted)

On the first trip my Father gave me a red covered book to get people to sign which I did for a couple of years, but its weight was mind boggling. In the mid 1990's Julie Stigter asked what had become of the first

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book and I told her. Together with Pauline Butler and Aaron Nicholson we went out and bought a new one which has since received proper binding.

In the early part of the 1990's I joined Aotearapa which became the place for some of the most famous fan fudes. Before Aotearapa's throat was slit by it's last editor I joined a Los Angeles based apa LASFAPA which I am still a member of (insert comment here Marty ☺) I know that Aotearapa has been revived in a semi electronic form in much the same way I'd once proposed. I wish them good luck, but have no interest in joining.

Another thing happened in the early part of the 1990's occurred in Auckland among all the fen I've met I've watched in fascination as this young man grew, the first or one of the first times I saw him he was dressed as Lieutenant Commander Data with white face and Next Gen Star Fleet Uniform. He had an interest in make-up and prosthetics and I would have loved to see the look on the police's face when he stood under a yellow street light with yellow face and pointed ears after he'd been in the first of his car accidents with Maree.

I too have been in a car accident with him and I know he doesn't like being reminded of it but it's made for folk law in New Zealand Fandom.

Has everyone seen my X-rays?

I just want to say to Norman Cates that I am most impressed with your dedication to your craft and to stick with it – I truly believe you're on your way to your first of many Oscars. (Small note -- Norman works for **Weta** in Wellington – home of **Lord of the Rings** among others)

I've been inactive in fandom in Australia for about a decade and I have to admit I don't have any real interest in revisiting the SF scene any-time soon. It's a pity really as I've fond memories of those times. One of the local focal points was when Heinz Maurer opened his own comic shop many of us would congregate there. Heinz would have been a showman in an earlier age and I always let him talk me into buying one or two more copies of yet another number 1 comic that had come out. One day he said "I thought of you." And put a book in my hand – a woman wearing a black beret adorned the cover. The name patch – Mespil Lunzie. Well, like Tad Williams once said, at least it doesn't have a half dozen apostrophises. I think I read most of "The Death of Sleep" before I bought it. I was fascinated by the every expanding world that Ann McCaffrey had envisaged with her collaborators. The story of Lunzie Mespil is an easy one, time and again she is put into cold sleep either willingly or not to wake in a later age and have to cope with societies changes.

Interestingly her 60 years of cold sleep gave her a generous payout from her employer and she was for a while able to live off the interest earned. As with all of the collaborators of Ann McCaffrey's (and having been engrossed in the Sassinak / Mespil stories) I've hunted out other books by one of the Authors ... Drats Book X of the Serano chronicles. It took me a long time to find book one & two Sporting Chance and Hunting Party and have thoroughly enjoyed reading them.

Sadly, we've lost some members of our community over the years, Roger Wadell, Paul James and Sue Connor to name but a few.

Convention Hotels: It wouldn't be a convention without some sort of mix up by the hotel. As Maree can attest I've either been double booked, not booked or in the case of the Alglen Hotel in Dunedin, I arrived and while checking in asked if the banks are still open as "I have no money" During the weekend, Pauline Menung approached me and asked if I would be able to pay for my room??? My comment that I had no money was taken by the hotel to mean "I had no money what so ever" where as I was meaning "I have no money on me and will go to the bank to get some more." The hotel had been making all of the con-goers

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pay for their rooms prior to the convention concluding. Now it's the norm to pre-book, or at least prepay a night at the convention hotel.

I've inadvertently omitted many books, comics, movies, tv shows and people and places, but I would like to say before I forget that if I were Batman, I'd shag Julie Newmar's unhinged Catwoman every day...

But it would be Lee Merriweather's Catwoman that I'd take home to meet Robin and Alfred.

I know there are a few people here who would like to share some juicy stories about me, so if we have time, perhaps Maree can come forward and share some embarrassing moments???