The Antipodean Areopagus

an Australasian agora
where seeds of wisdom
flower in reasoned discourse

for ANZAPA #259
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Don’t wait for the Last Judgment. It happens every day
Albert Camus (1913-1960)

Illustration: ‘The Whims of December’ by Carol Kewley
“There’s a certain amount of irony that a Nobel Peace Prize winner should be hosting a dinner and last year’s Nobel Prize winner is under house arrest.”

John McCain, referring to the state dinner at the White House on January 19th, 2011, in honour of China’s president Hu Jintao.

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Areopagus Nexus

Dictionary definitions of Nexus include
- connection: a connection or link associating two or more people or things;
- connected group: a group or series of connected people or things; and
- centre: the centre or focus of something.

The Antipodean Areopagus is the interim title of this zine replacing my long-running title Interstellar Ramjet Scoop. It will serve for a time as the connection between IRS and either its return or whatever is destined to replace it. My life has entered uncharted territory where one has to face long-neglected personal issues relating to chronic illness, interpersonal relations, lifestyle, money management and possession pollution. At this stage, I have no idea when or if IRS will reappear. Meanwhile I’ll give this little effort my best shot.

But where did the title come from, and what does it mean?

In recent discourse with John Bangsund to do with the gestation of a newly minted Keats and Chapman story that appears on page five, we meandered into consideration of personal space in which we ‘live and move and have our being’. The quote in italics is from the Acts of the Apostles penned by Saint Paul (the name given by churchmen to Saul of Tarsus after his allegedly miraculous conversion to Christianity on the road to Damascus).

John praised my “retained familiarity with St Paul’s haranguing the crowd at the Areopagus in Athens, or at least the words about living, moving and existing,” and enthused on what a ripping yarn the Book of Acts is, especially in a modern translation. He ended with the observation, “Pity about the religious stuff.”

As always occurs after converse with Bangsund, I fell into reverie. This time I was one of the free-thinking artisans of ancient Athens who had set up a statue of the Unknown God in the Areopagus to satirise the proliferation of Deities in those uncertain times. It was then that I was struck with a blinding revelation of my own. Why not name my new zine after that iconic elevation*?

* According to Wikipedia, the Areopagus is the ‘Rock of Ares’, north-west of the Acropolis, which in classical times functioned as the high court of appeal for criminal and civil cases in Athens. Ares was supposed to have been tried here by the gods for the murder of Poseidon’s son Alirrothios.

So much for the Name. But what of its character? John had been reading some of Christopher Smart’s poetry, mainly bits from Jubilate Agno (1760s), in hope that he might find a zine title for me…

For I bless God for the Postmaster general
& all conveyancers of letters under his care especially Allen & Shelvock.
For the Mouse prevails in Latin.
For edi-mus, bibi-mus, vivi-mus, ore-mus.
…
For the Mouse is of an hospitable disposition.

… which is as good a reason as any for dropping Latin tags into The Antipodean Areopagus. John went on to talk about the pages about Christopher Smart’s poetry, starting with the line, ‘For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry’. “Oh, so much poetry, so little time to read it!” he lamented as Nox claimed his spirit and he toddled off to bed.

So The Antipodean Areopagus bids fair to be a whimsical zine. We’ll see how it fares in 2011.

This issue’s cover


At the time neither of us had an inkling of massive rainfalls that were to engulf the Eastern half of the continent of Australia in January 2011, causing catastrophic floods in Queensland over an area bigger that France and Germany combined and turning northern Victoria into a vast inland lake.
Letter from (North) America

Letter from Lloyd Penney


October 23rd, 2010

Dear Bill:

Got the December, 2010, Interstellar Ramjet Scoop, and many thanks for that. That’s a great steampunkish illustration on the front, with Santa using top steam power to get those toys and gifts literally everywhere.

The Lord does work in mysterious ways, and from Graeme’s vantage point, those ways were downright weird. I guess everything balances out…somehow…

More on the cover. Seeing I know some French, Mr. Ditmar, I will inform la Régie de la langue Francaise about the under-sea Cedilla, and you will get what you deserve, so there. (rolls eyes). And so will that Bangsund character. I have connections.

Letter from America? Well, North America, in my case. There are people out there who have no idea what a Vic20 was. I am tempted to dress up in something military with a certain logo on the epaulettes, and call myself Commodore 64… Yvonne and I did get our special Aurora Award pins at SFContario in November. I am assured that my Hugo nomination pin and certificate are still on the way here. Maybe it will be here for Christmas?

I must wade into the Web and look up The Chap…sounds a little steampunkish, unless he’s just having a little fun at the expense of the average Englishman. After all these years of receiving Ethel from the Melbourne SF Club, page 9 contains what I believe is the first cover of the original Etherline I’ve ever seen. Page 19 has the second. I would wonder about where Gordon Rix was from in Canada…

The story about Mr. Gorsky may be urban myth, but in the fullness of time, when and if we get back to the moon, I would like to see a moon feature or building (eventually) named after Mr. Gorsky. Let future generations puzzle that one out.

I know how Stefan feels…I am still looking for daytime work. There’s plenty of opportunities for unpaid work and internships and volunteer positions, but something’s got to pay the bills. I am not a non-profit organization, although it looks that way sometimes.

Bill, Yvonne and I wish you the best of Christmases and New Years, and we can pick up this conversation in 2011. Many thanks!

Yours,

Lloyd Penney.
Chapman’s Nephews – a newly minted Keats and Chapman story by John Bangsund

The magic is back, though it suffered a little tweaking in e-mail exchanges between the Great Man and the editor. Here is the second newly minted Keats and Chapman anecdote to be coined in the twenty-first century, the first being an existential exchange concerning the pair’s brief social intercourse with the philosopher Descartes published on page 12 of IRS August 2009: http://efanzines.com/IRS/IRS-2009-08.pdf.

Keats once asked Chapman in a desultory way how his American nephews were getting on.

"Oh, they’re still living on the West Coast, you know. Chip gave up the monastic life and is now, of all things, a racing-car driver."

"Young Chester is still sketching as a hobby, but has taken to playing golf for a living. Apparently he’s quite good at it."

"Sporting chaps," Keats remarked.

"In a manner of speaking, yes," said Chapman, "but otherwise they are as different as torque and tees."

Keats thought for a moment, then said: "Not one of our better efforts, I’m afraid. I understand the oblique reference to my ‘stout Cortez’ thing, and to chipmunks -- or Friar Chip -- but I can make nothing of Chester."

Chapman, embarrassed, said "Chester draws."

John Bangsund


For those who came in late...

John Bangsund (born 1939) was a prominent Australian science fiction fan in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and, in the opinion of many fanzine editors, is Australia’s greatest living fan writer. He was a major force with New York fan Andrew Porter behind Australia winning the right to host the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention Aussiecon in Melbourne in 1975 and was Toastmaster at the Hugo Awards ceremony at that convention.

He was an influential and founding member of ANZAPA, the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association; and long-time editor of the newsletter of the Victorian chapter of the Australian Society of Editors where he is an honorary life member. His fanzine, Australian Science Fiction Review, did much to revive science fiction fandom in Australia during the 1960s. He was co-chair of the 9th Australian S.F. Convention (1970), and Fan Guest of Honour at the 1974 Australian National SF Convention (OzCon).

* John Bangsund’s Keats and Chapman stories are in the style of Irish satirist ‘Count O’Blather’ Myles na Gopaleen alias Flann O’Brien, whose real name was Brian O’Nuallain (1911-1966).

Bangsund is the instigator of the term Muphry’s Law, which states that "if you write anything criticizing editing or proofreading, there will be a fault of some kind in what you have written".
Chinese Year of the Rabbit

2011 is the **Year of the Rabbit**, beginning on 3rd February 2011 and ending on 22nd January 2012. The Rabbit is the fourth sign of the Chinese Zodiac, which consists of twelve animal signs.

The Zodiac below doesn’t go past the year 2005 but, since the cycle of animal signs repeats itself every twelve years, it’s easy enough to calculate which sign relates to 2011. The last Year of the Rabbit was in 1999 so, 1999 + 12 = 2011 is also a Year of the Rabbit.

Here’s why it happens…”

Five thousand years ago, Buddha summoned all the animals to him before departing the Earth. When only twelve came to bid him farewell they were rewarded by having a year named after them in order of their arrival. And that is why the animals of the Chinese zodiac are, in serial progression: **Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog & Pig.**

A person’s ruling animal is the one which presided over their year of birth and, according to the Chinese, the animal which hides in that person’s heart.

For civil purposes modern China uses the Gregorian calendar established by the Catholic Church in 1582 and based solely on the Sun’s movements (visit page 7 in: [http://efanzines.com/IRS/IRS-2010-02.pdf](http://efanzines.com/IRS/IRS-2010-02.pdf) for details).

It has, though, retained the traditional Chinese calendar dating from the reign of Emperor Huang Ti in 2637 BC to determine the timing of its festivals.

The Chinese calendar is lunisolar, being based on the movement of the longitude of the Sun and the phases of the Moon. It is the most ancient chronological record in history.

**Elements of the Chinese Zodiac**

It is not just the familiar animals of the **Chinese zodiac** that determine your personality. Chinese astrology is actually a ‘stem/branch’ system. The five elements (the stem) are also crucial factors, viz.

![Elements of the Chinese Zodiac]

These five elements impact the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac by assigning different characteristics to each. Since the animals actually represent a period of time, i.e. a year for each of the twelve branches, assigning one of the five elements to each of those animal-designated years results in sixty different combinations. So, rather than following twelve-year cycles, the Chinese Zodiac is actually based on a system of sixty-year cycles.

**Metal Rabbits** were born in the years 1891, 1951 and 2011. They are articulate, talented, ambitious, virtuous, reserved and are reputed to have excellent taste. On the other hand, they are overly fond of gossip, canny at business and tinny at gambling – traits that can often lead to a lack of trust. Metal Rabbits have to work hard at being tactful, conscientious, generally kind, rarely backing out of contracts and moderating their penchant for the punt. Then they may win praise for being conservative and wise.

These traits constitute both their weaknesses and their strengths and are central to their innermost being.

*Bill Wright*
Conventions on the horizon

NULLUS ANXIOETUS 3 – THE THIRD AUSTRALIAN DISCWORLD CONVENTION
featuring Terry Pratchett. 8–10 April, 2011. Venue: Panthers World of Entertainment, Mulgoa Road, Penrith NSW. An excellent long weekend filled with fun, entertaining performances, fun, interesting discussions and wonderful people (and more fun). Warning: May contain Terry Pratchett.  http://ausdwcon.org/

SWANCON Thirty Six | NATCON Fifty. 21-25 April, 2011. Hyatt Regency Hotel, Adelaide Tce, Perth, WA. Natcon Fifty is all about fandom, and a party in your honour – all you have to do is show up and have fun.  http://2011.swancon.com.au/.

CONTINUUM 7 will be held 10-13 June, 2011.


Nominations for DUFF 2011

Since 1972 the Down Under Fan Fund, a fan-supported fellowship, has encouraged closer ties between science-fiction fans in Australasia and North America through an alternating exchange of representatives. DUFF delegates attend the Worldcon or a national convention in the host country and visit fans they might otherwise never meet in person. Delegates are responsible for raising funds and administering DUFF until a new delegate from their continent is elected, and are expected to publish trip reports which can be sold to aid the fund.

This time the race is for an Australian fan to travel to Renovation, 17 August 2011 to 21 August 2011 (See: http://www.renovationsf.org/).

Nominations for the Australasia to US trip must be received by the administrators by midnight Thursday 31 March 2011. This year voting will close 20th May 2011. DUFF is entirely fan/volunteer run by the winning candidates from the previous election.

Nominations can be sent to:

**American DUFF Administrator**

John F Hertz

236 S Coronado St #409

Los Angeles CA 90057

Phone: (213)384-6622

Email: john_hertz2010@hotmail.com

**Australian DUFF Administrator**

Emma Hawkes

9/36 Cape Street

Osborne Park WA 6017

Phone: 08 9443 4581

Email: ehawkes@iinet.net.au

Anyone may nominate who is active in fandom. “Active in fandom” means involved in fannish pursuits such as fanfic writing or reading, convention running or attending, amateur film/video production, or club participation, or online participation in fannish life, or fanzine editing, etc.

For the Australasian-US trip, each candidate must be nominated by three Australasian fans and two North American fans. Each candidate will have a written platform and promises (barring Acts of God) to travel to the 2011 WorldCon, and to serve as administrator of the fund until the next American delegate is elected.

Nominations for DUFF are to be accompanied by a 150 word platform and a donation of $25 for DUFF. Payment can be made by Paypal to ehawkes@iinet.net.au or by cheque to the Australian Science Fiction Foundation P.O. Box 215 Forest Hill Victoria 3131 or to John Hertz, 246 S Coronado St #409, Los Angeles CA 90057.

You can find more information from...

Emma Hawkes (ehawkes@iinet.net.au) or John Hertz (john_hertz2010@hotmail.com).

About fan funds

This is about Fan Funds, their origin, what they’re for, how they work and why you should support them.

It all started in the 1950s when a group of fans in the United Kingdom decided it would be nice to send their mate Walt Willis to a Worldcon in Chicago. Walt was very appreciative and went out of his way to help the convention and represent his country to the best of his ability. On his return, he filled several fanzines with reports from the convention. Remember, this was well before the Internet so fanzines were the only way people got to hear about far away conventions. From this small beginning, the Trans Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) that sends a European representative to North America, and vice versa, in alternate years, was born.

The above mentioned Down Under Fan Fund (DUFF) alternately sending fans between the US and Australia was the next major fan fund, and this was followed by GUFF, which stands for either Going Under Fan Fund or Get Up-and-over Fan Fund, sending fans between Europe and Australia.

Fan Fund laureates represent the best their country has to offer at the host country’s top convention. They enrich fandom globally and their delegates are good company. That’s why you should support them with your donation when the time comes to vote for the candidate of your choice.

*Bill Wright*
Archiving science fiction

There won’t be many readers of this fanzine who haven’t heard about Meteor Incorporated: http://meteor.org.au, a Victorian-based incorporated association founded in August 2007 with members in most States, whose ultimate objective is to set up of a permanent science fiction institution and research collection in Australia.

Meteor Inc is an Eastern States initiative, but now there are encouraging new developments in Australian SF archiving emanating from the West. It started in July 2010 when Western Australian fan Grant Stone (who broadcasts The Faster Than Light Radio Show that’s been going to air every week on RTR-FM since the 1970s) left Perth’s Murdoch University where he had been building up SF collections in the university’s library.

Those collections had been languishing since his departure. So, in January 2011, the university’s Dr Chris Creagh started doing something about funding future management of the collections. She’s also involved in a fan initiative to build a web-based distributed archive of Australian SF material in collections everywhere.

There’ll be panels at Swancon 36 (the fiftieth Australian National SF Convention Perth on 21-25 April 2011) to discuss both of these developments.

For details, please read the following separate reports on the Murdoch University Library SF Collections Preservation Fund and the Australian Science Fiction Distributed Archives Project.

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Murdoch University Library SF Collections Preservation Fund

Following curator Grant Stone’s departure in July 2010 there were months of conjecture about the ‘in Limbo’ status of the ‘Murdoch Collection’ (including, in particular, Leigh Edmonds’s fabulous fanzine collection from the 1960s and 70s). Then, on 13-Jan-2011, Dr Chris Creagh, academic chair of Physics and Nanotechnology and a member of the Murdoch University Science Fiction/Speculative Fiction Foundation circulated an e-mail to local SF fans detailing categories of material in the collection. She also outlined a plan to catalogue, archive and manage the collection for the benefit of fan researchers as well as Murdoch University’s staff and students, and appealed for funds to continue the project. Here, verbatim, is her plea…

“For the MU SF Foundation, just let people know we are looking for money, via the Donations form http://library.murdoch.edu.au/forms/donation_scifi_collection.pdf, to care for the SF collections in the Murdoch University. We’re looking for a lot of small donations – not necessarily big ones or regular ones – to get things started. All donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.”

Lots of early donations, no matter how small, are needed to get this under way.

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Australian Science Fiction Distributed Archive Project (ASFDAP)

Murdoch University’s Dr Chris Creagh shares the editor’s vision of a web-based Australian science fiction distributed archive. So we’ll put it up for discussion in the academic stream of Swancon 36, 50th Australian National Science Fiction Convention to be held in Perth, Western Australia on April 21-25, 2011.

The Australian Science fiction Distributed Archives Project (ASFDAP) is a fan initiative and its working group is not asking for any money to get it going. It will be wiki and blog based, so anyone anywhere in the world can add information and material once they have verified they are human and not a bot. The group is starting with Western Australian content because that is all they have, i.e.

- SF collections in the Murdoch University library;
- Personal collections;
- group collections of materials that fall under the banner of ‘The History Project’; plus
- any interesting “stuff” from the ‘WASFF Shambling Mound’ (4 compacted boxes of material and archives that follows the Western Australian Science Fiction Foundation chair around).
At the same time, people could be contributing their materials to the blog and wiki from all other states in Australia and anyone in the world could also contribute any Australian content that they have. All that’s needed is people who have the time to put the specifics of their material on-line.

If universities are holding material it’s likely they have catalogued it. Then all Dr Creagh’s group has to do on the wiki is point people at that universities catalogue after they’ve let everyone know what they are holding. Then standard university loans procedures kick in if people want to look at it. If material is in a private collection then researchers would have to make personal arrangements to visit the collection. The university libraries would not be involved in that case.

Dr Creagh is not worried right now about who will be using the wiki and blog. For starters, she just wants to get the information about the contents of the MU Library, History Project and Shambling Mound in one place where it can be found if people want to look. The information will be open to all, just as Wikipedia is.

She’ll arrange a place on the Swancon 36 program for focused discussion various aspects of ASFDAP. She’s also asking for people to contribute information material to the blog & wiki about SF material / collections they have access to. Here, verbatim, is her plea to fans in the Eastern states that support her initiative…

“As far as ASFDAP goes - talk to people over east and find out where there are collections of “stuff” and what condition the material is in. Find out if the material is catalogued in any way. See if there is anyone interested in putting information about that material on-line. There’s no need to send money for ASFDAP. Just e-mail the information to Chris Creagh (illiad@westnet.com.au) under the heading ASFDAP.

“If you can come to the Natcon with a list of eastern states collections, an idea of what is in them and a contact person for them, that would be brilliant. You could also ask small press publishers and authors what type of material they might be looking for, and ask fans if they are interested in the history of SF fandom in Australia.

Who’s Who in ASFDAP

Members of Dr Creagh’s fan group from Murdoch University Science Fiction/Speculative Fiction Foundation who are working on the ASFDAP project are: Chris Creagh (convener), Anna Hepworth, Doug Burbidge, Kris Parker, Elaine Walker, Elaine Kemp and Steve Gunnel.

- **Chris Creagh** is the facilitator. She helps out where she can and keeps things on track and moving along.
- **Anna Hepworth** has been working on the WA history project archive for a couple of years.
- **Doug Burbidge** is the chair of WASFF and a computer person.
- **Kris Parker** is a computer guru and SF fan.
- **Elaine Walker** is a dedicated fan, a physicist who knows computer stuff and has been involved with many SwanCons.
- **Elaine Kemp** took the pictures for the Murdoch collections and will do the same for the History archive. She is also the treasurer for WASFF and a writer.
- **Steve Gunnel** has been there from the beginning of SwanCons and is also computer savvy.

Thus will the Murdoch collection be brought into contact with its adoring fans by the magic of the interwebs. Then, reasons the group optimistically, it will be ridiculously easy for the eastern fans to add to the magic and populate the interweb on their side of Australia with their SF material. Obviously that will be an ongoing process fuelled by the needs of writers, editors, publishers and readers who’ll be using this Distributed Archives wiki. The more collections of Australian SF memorabilia are added the more useful it will become.

These are worthy projects deserving of our encouragement and support.


And let Chris Creagh know if you’re aware of collections in public or private hands and who their curators or owners are. Send your e-mail to Chris Creagh (illiad@westnet.com.au) under the heading ASFDAP.

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**Bill Wright**
Agora

“The glory and mystery of art can lie in the tension between the appearance and reality, or, rather between the subject-matter and what is made of it. The view that the subject-matter should be itself enlightening still persists, chiefly because a moral stock response comes more easily to most people than a genuine aesthetic transport.”  ANTHONY BURGESS

One of Melbourne’s oldest fannish traditions is the film soiree held once a month on First Friday evenings at the home of Race and Iola Mathews on the Southern bank of the Yarra River close to town.

Race founded the Melbourne Science Fiction Club in 1952 and his guests are drawn in about equal measure from MSFC members from the 1950s and later additions to SF fandom who have become his friends since then. There’s a selection process that involves polling those people for choice of the film to be shown on each of those nights after a smorgasbord supper provided by the guests who each contribute something. Fine wines, exotic cheeses, casseroles, chicken wings, quiches, cheese cake .. you name it, it’s there.

On 4th February 2011 the film shown was Agora, set in Fourth Century AD Roman Egypt about the female mathematician, philosopher and astronomer Hypatia who, from her teaching position in the Library of Alexandria, struggled to save the knowledge of classical antiquity from destruction by Christian mobs intent on obliterating the last vestiges of Paganism from the province. Released on 17 May 2009, it was produced by Cinebiss movie studio, directed by Alejandro Amenábar and starred Rachel Weisz as Hypatia.

This showing attracted a very select group of SF fans comprising Race and Iola Mathews, Lee Harding, Tony Thomas, Bruce Gillespie, Carey Handfield and Bill Wright. Afterwards, there was a bit of tension arising from different views about the film that were stoutly defended by their proponents. Tony Thomas weighed in first with complaints about the dreadful Hollywood-style-dirge music, historical inaccuracies in the plot and, to his mind, poor acting by Rachel Weisz. It was hard for others to resist his adamant, albeit valid, assertions of negative sentiment in the short time before the film’s end and departure time; so later that night I sent attendees an e-mail with the weblink to a balanced review of the film:

Lee Harding’s e-mailed response was,
“A good article. Happily, the majority of people who see Agora will know nothing about the historical background, nor will they care much, but they will be entertained and, hopefully, enlightened enough to pursue the historical 'facts', which after all may be as fictitious as this film. A fine film for those who approach the film as film, and on its own terms. But alas, historical pedants are in for a rough ride.

And Bruce Gillespie weighed in with,
“The review certainly sums up the feelings of unease I had when first watching the film, and which Tony was trying to articulate. Great to have a much wider historical perspective on a period I know very little about. My original feeling remains that the problem with 'Agora' is similar to that in Golding's 'Lord of the Flies' -- once you know what the setup is, you know what the ending will be. What I enjoyed in 'Agora' this time around is the rhythm of the film, the slow dance between mayhem forces and the forces of contemplation. I hadn't previously watched the last three-quarters of an hour of the film, but I was pleased to find that the basic pattern of the film prevails throughout.

“My own rejection of the film,” Bruce continued, “was based on the same feelings felt by people who cannot bear to see animals treated badly in any film -- the idea of a library being desecrated is too much to bear; and it is hard to watch the Christians depicted here, who are just the loonier version of all those nice people I grew up with, for whom thinking was a redundancy and absolute faith is the only test of any action. I know those baddies. They are true, even if much of the rest of film is an oversimplification.”

The editor’s impressions are distorted by the film’s depiction of forced conversions to Christianity under threat of being stoned to death, a potent symbol of social control in those days. For me, that had its parallel in the brutal and protracted caning I received at a Catholic school at the age of twelve that had a profound albeit none too beneficial effect on my spiritual formation and social development.

Bill Wright
Stefan zone

On December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2010, Stefan and his employer said their goodbyes and went their separate ways after eight years. For now, he’s rejoicing at not doing any more unpaid work. When it sinks in that he won’t be doing any paid work either, the editor believes he’ll look for another job.

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JOB HUNTING – BE MY OWN BOSS?

Now that it’s the New Year, I'd better start doing something about getting another job and cleaning up my room. Getting another job is the easier of the two. Some people have suggested I start my own business, but could I ever be my own boss?

Not wanting to dismiss this idea immediately (That would mean no e-mail material), I did consider it. Not a large organisation - that would require too much paperwork. Something much smaller, like a Jim's franchise style of business.

Originally, Jim used to be just about mowing but recently he's expanded into over 30 franchise areas including Blind Cleaning (unsure why they can't shower themselves) and Bath Resurfacing (when you've been under water in the bath and surface for a second time).

Now I don't want to compete directly against Jim's because he's a big bloke and might decide to open Franchise area 31 - Jim's Bashings. I'll have to choose areas that Jim's hasn’t franchised as yet. I also need to be careful of the name because choosing the right name will mean your listing will rank higher than others when listed alphabetically. For example one of my franchises will be AARDVARK COLLECTING.

Note how I don't go for the “AAARDVARK” for listing purposes in the phone book (or, as the young uns say today, "on line") as AARDVARK will rank higher. Let me prove it.

As anyone who has learned the Alphabet knows (this excludes anyone who's been through the school system since the 1980's), 'Double A' will be listed in the 'D's while 'Triple A' will be down under 'T'. Even if I called the business Three A's-R-D-V-A-R-K, it would only move it up slightly from TR to TH in the listing. Using Quadruple A-R-D-V-A-R-K would mean it would be down under Q although calling it Four A's would bring it back to F which would be much better, but it would still rank worse than the D's.

Those after overseas clients who read lists starting at the bottom would be better off with a franchise name starting with Z, like ZUNDER CLEANING. This would push it down towards the bottom while those who just call their businesses Z will be listed under ‘ZED’. The trick would be to find enough ZUNDER’s to clean, but that just opens up another business opportunity.

Enough of the alphabet lessons for now. Time to run through just some of the other areas of business I’ll be getting into.

* PHOTOCOPY / PRINTER FILLER-UP-ER.

When faced with an empty photocopier or printer, most office people will only add enough sheets to cover their own needs. I’ll fill up all the trays to
the top. Yes, I know it’s never been done before, but I did say I offered a Top level of service.

* COMPUTER DISSERVICE – (also known as Ctrl+Alt+Delete). This is a service I can run by phone while on another franchise job.

* FINANCE UNPROFESSIONALS – Plenty of unsound (and unsafe) financial advice on offer.

On second thoughts it all sounds like a lot of work. I think I’ll give myself a holiday to recover.

THE 529kg BEHOMETH - NO, I DON’T MEAN STEFAN

It's week 7 at home and I've finally started to clean up my room. It had to happen sometime, I guess, or I'd have to raise the grey flag and surrender to the dust. Next week I start a temp/contract role for a few months back at my old company (not in the same department, obviously). My dream role would be to work in the Nut and Bolt factory where I'd hopefully be paid to do Nutting all day. If they ever found out I was being paid to do nothing, then I'd Bolt.

One entire day of my room clean up was spent on the bookcases, the reason for which became evident when I weighed the 1,037 books and they totalled some 529 kg's. My 10-12 kg work bag pales into insignificance when compared to that.

Not only did I have to take out the 529 kg's of books in order to clean the bookcases, but I then had to put them all back again - weight lifting over 1,050 kg's in a day. If any of you go to the gym and there's someone bragging that they can lift a couple of hundred kg's, just tell them you know someone who lifted over a ton. True Dinks! I've included a photo of the books for proof. Obviously I couldn't take a picture of myself lifting all the books as I can't do two things at the same time like I used to.

Like me, the books have expanded over the years, putting on a few hundred kilos in just the last few years. Mum's scared that the bookcases will collapse under the weight, the floor will give way and then the whole house will cave in, causing a black hole which will swallow the earth. Well, she's really only stated the first two, but I've just expanded it out a bit more.

To think the media was scared last year about the Large Hadron Collider and whether it would mean the end of the world. Over $4.6 Billion has been spent on it so far. In contrast, I've spent under $50,000 to produce the same scare.

Next up, how to create a Man Made Global Warming scare for under $100,000!

COMING SOON TO STEFAN TV - CANNIBAL KITCHEN

We’ve had so many cooking shows of late that the TV stations have run out of ideas, yet again. It's got that bad that one channel even has a Poo cooking show. The name was jazzed up for obvious reasons - I think it's spelled "Poh" and has the word 'Kitchen' following. Probably filmed down the Werribee Sewerage Farm.

One TV station is even trying to promote a cooking program where all the people are criminals. Anyone who's had their credit card skimmed after visiting a restaurant will have already experienced this. I heard they tried getting Chopper Reid on to display his chopping skills.

If they're thinking a show about cooking criminals will go down well, why not go the whole hog and make a show about convicted cannibals? That's what Stefan TV is about to do. Our legal department decided on the name 'Cannibal Kitchen' after finding 'Fine Young Cannibals' was already taken. Who would have thought that Cannibals would also be into music? I suppose there is that saying that music soothes the savage beasts.

Without giving too much away, my show will start with 20 cannibals and end up at the Grand Final with just two left. It goes without saying that any
cannibal voted off at the end of each week gets devoured by those remaining.

Just like the criminal show, the Cannibal Kitchen show is all about showing the public that these convicted cannibals aren't really bad people. It's just that society is against them and they made some silly mistakes, like using the white instead of the red when serving up their enemies.

There are plenty of new recipes on display over the weeks and you can even go and visit the Cannibal Kitchen restaurant in downtown Melbourne. For some reason, they don't seem to generate much repeat business.

Would you come to a restaurant where a cannibal is serving you? I think you'll find you'll only be on the menu the once.

THE OPERA WINDBAG SHOW – DOWN UNDER

The Opera (Yes, I know it's spelled Oprah overseas) Winbag show has landed in Australia this week, with Opera and 300 of her disciples descending on the outback like a swarm of locusts. The last time we had an invasion like this was back in World War 2. For the next few days they will be shown the best of what Australia has to offer (Yes, it only takes a few days to cover the lot).

Admittedly, they weren't meant to come to Australia but now they’re here, we have to pay for them. Opera originally wanted to go to Austria, but someone in her crew got a bit confused and thought she meant Australia. The Americans do that sometimes. You could see her confusion when she came on her show on ski's and wearing a ski jacket with Austria on it, only to be confronted with a Qantas plane and pictures of the Australian outback.

Now the Australian taxpayers will fund these backpackers as they slug it up at top resorts around Australia.

Why should her sect people have all the fun? I'm willing to send all my readers to Australia at absolutely NO cost to the Australian Taxpayers. Luckily only a few of you are living overseas, but if you would just jump on one of the many people smuggling boats heading our way, you'll arrive in no time.

Once in Australia, I'll take you around to see the local attractions. It's lucky I'm unemployed at the moment, else I'd have to do this during my lunch time. Your trip will include:

* A guided tour of the Werribee Sewerage Farm.
* A free trip on the free City Circle Tram
* A free walk in one of Melbourne's parks
* Busking / begging in one of Melbourne’s streets. Well, you'll have to pay for your own lunch somehow!
* Duty free smokes (if you can find any half-decent ones on the footpath)
* Duty free grog (if you can find any dregs in bottles and cans outside one of the many grog shop that litter the suburbs)
* A free shopping trolley for any shopping you do while in Australia
* A free tour of the floodwaters in Victoria and New South Wales
* A trip to a town that rejected a Mc Dogs store
* A guide to hitch-hiking in Australia so you can see some of the other attractions for yourself. I can’t travel too far as I may need to attend an interview one of these days.

And that’s just a taste of what’s in store. Opera’s pampered tour doesn’t even come close to my tour for adventure and amazing views of Australiana. The tour starts next Thursday at 10am so I’ll see you all then. There’s just so much to see once someone tells you what to look for and everyone else pays for it.

I’m quite sure Customs are already coming across other Americans arriving in Australia expecting to be shown around for nothing. That’s why I’ve brib... asked Customs to send these people to my new business:

Stefan’s Out Back Adventures. (I was hoping for an OBE, but OBA is pretty close)

When they arrive, I’ll send them out back and they can have a look at the back yard. The best thing about it is it's FREE!

Dear Rubik's Cube,
Done!
Sincerely, Colorblind

http://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Rubik%27s_Cube
LAST-MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FROM STEFAN

Were you unsure what to give people for Christmas? Next time, why not let someone do all the work for you.

Stefan has set up a new online website just in time for Christmas (Actually, I’ve just renamed an old dating website before the authorities closed it down). Simply log into don'tloginhere@whoever.whatever.wherever and follow the prompts.

Once you answer all the questions about yourself, the person you are buying for and your price range, my website will spit out a number of gift choices that closely match something entirely different to what you’ve entered. Despite which gift you end up choosing, another will be selected and your credit card will be overbilled. We’ll even send it to the wrong address free of charge just so you have to contact us by phone on our premium $15 / minute number.

Here are just a few of the Christmas Gifts available online.

* Know someone who has just purchased an Electric car? Why not give them this 500 km long power cord for only $885.95.  
[Power not included]

* What about that child / partner who spends their waking hours in front of a computer / game console? You can't go past this rocket-fuelled ejector seat for only $750.00. Set the timer or select the 'Random' function.  
[Fuel not included. 'Random' function may not be random. Not suitable for the elderly or children under 5]

* Sick of all the 'I' technologies that have flooded the market these past few years? Tired of people bumping into you in the street while on their I-phone and the slow coaches in front of you with their I-pads while others glare at you with their I-sockets ? What you need is the Stefan I-Zapper (TM) which utilises the latest Be-Gone (TM) technology.  

Simply point the I-Zapper (TM) at the offending piece of I-technology, twist the handle, pull the lever, adjust the power to 10 and wait 5 minutes, flick the switch and press the button - it’s that simple. Lo and behold, it turns the I-technology into another hunk of useless techno junk.  
[Batteries not included. Does not work on boring people who over-use the word 'I']

* Tired of racking up all those speeding tickets? Why not try this latest gadget from Stefan Enterprises ?  
SLOW DOWN (TM) is guaranteed to stop those pesky speeding fines without you having to go to the expense of recalibrating your speedo, which obviously MUST be wrong as you never speed, do you?. SLOW DOWN (TM) utilises LOOK OUT (TM) technology.  

Once installed, if you go over the speed limit, a loud LOOK OUT !! is emitted, followed by a truck horn blaring and a screech of brakes that gets louder and louder. If you haven't slowed down by then, the car's steering suddenly goes haywire and a loud "Crunch !" is sounded followed by ear-piercing screams. If you still haven't slowed down, the engine seizes up. When you do slow down, a small "thank you" is heard.  

In trials, 48 % of participating drivers left the car wherever it ended up and ran off screaming their head off, while 50 % returned home driving at 5 km/h and vowing never to drive again while. Note how this also saves the environment or something.

Log on now for more Christmas gift ideas. Be sure to have your credit card or someone else’s handy. The good thing about it is you can also blame us for the late arrival of your presents as we backdate all our orders 6 weeks for tax purposes. Simply point to the confirmation order and say, “... But I ordered it six weeks ago, see here?. It must have been Australia Post again...”

I hope you had a Merry Christmas

Stefan
What to do on Australia Day

Australia Day is celebrated annually on 26th January. This year, 2011, during Jamie Ruell & Sarah Endacott’s Australia Day BBQ in the grounds of their pioneer homestead in Melbourne’s outer suburb of Croydon South, we sang John Bangsund’s *Ostrillian Notional Anthem* composed for (but never submitted to) Prime Minister Gough Whitlam’s National Anthem competition in 1973. For fellow survivors of that era whose memories are not what they were, for others who weren’t around in that era and for non-Australians looking for inspiration in this antipodean agora, the Lyrics are republished here. They are sung to the tune of *The Red Flag*.

Refrain: Orstrilia! Orstrilia!
Ya know we’ll never filia!
We'll fight fer ya and die fer ya
Whene'er yer foes assilia!
Our sunburnt land is green in spots;
There's gold in sand -- and we've got lots.
We're big on Truth and Liberty:
Orstrilia is the place for we!

The East is red, the South is not --
This is the Land That Time Forgot.
But Time has caught up with us now
And we're all reading Chairman Mao.
Yes, Time has caught up with us now,
And we're all reading Chairman Mao,
But Chairman Mao is rather bleak
So now and then we read *Newsweek*.

Refrain: Orstrilia! Orstrilia! ..., etc.

With E.G. Whitlam at our head
We'll soon be either red or dead.
Whichever it turns out to be,
It is our modest Destiny.
Whichever it turns out to be,
It is our modest Destiny --
But Destinies are born, not made,
So ours will likely be mislaid.

Refrain: Orstrilia! Orstrilia! ..., etc.

We've all got homes and cars and jobs;
We're all right, Jack, but we're not snobs!
If everyone was like we are
This World would be Utopia!
If everyone was like we are
This World would be Utopia!
There'd be a lot less strife and fuss
If everyone was just like us!

Orstrilia! Orstrilia!
Ya know we'll never filia!
We'll fight fer ya and die fer ya
Whene'er yer foes assilia!
Our blokes are beaut, our sheilas grouse,
And we have got an Opera House --
And pies with sauce, and BHP:
Orstrilia is the place for we!


For the next couple of years the anthem was sung on local fannish occasions. Then, at the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention, Melbourne, 1975, all of fandom seemed to adopt it. It was sung with gusto on jumbo jets departing from Melbourne for all corners of the known globe, and the editor believes it has been sung since whenever Australia has made a bid for the World Convention. It was sung at the 43rd World Convention, Melbourne, 1985 and again at the 57th Worldcon in Melbourne in 1999. I have no idea if it was filked at the 68th Worldcon in Melbourne in 2010 but, as witness its performance at the BBQ, there are remnants of fandom that remember it still.

*Bill Wright*