

EMERALD CITY

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An occasional 'zine produced by Cheryl Morgan and available from her at cherylmorgan@compuserve.com

Introduction

A new year, a new departure? Perhaps. If I can get my act together in time, and the paperwork goes through swiftly, this will be the first issue of Emerald City to be officially published on its own web site. EmCit.com is currently in the process of coming into being, and eventually I hope to have the whole run of the 'zine up there. Please note that this does not mean that any current service will be curtailed, nor am I planning to add loads of web-specific features to the 'zine. I may, if and when I get a digital camera, add photographs to trip and convention reports on the web, but other than that all versions will remain the same in content.

In view of this, and entirely by accident I should add, this issue happens to be a cyberpunk special. We have Tad Williams branching out, William Gibson recycling old ideas, and, if the wholesalers get their act together, Jeff Noon getting high on feathers again.

This is also, to a certain extent, my first look at potential Hugo nominees for 1997. Gibson is, of course, on any such list by right. Tad's book might be considered good enough, but is held back by being so obviously only a first part of something greater. And Noon is on my list regardless because I trust him to produce something as good as the last two novels.

In addition, this issue has something in the way of guest editors. Giulia de Cesare and Steve Davies of *Plokta* will be staying with me during the production period as part of their Oz-touring honeymoon. Whether or not I will be able to persuade them to write anything is another matter. We shall see.

Other Worlds, Other Genres

A couple of years back now, Tad Williams produced one of the best fantasy novels I have ever read (for pedants, it was published as a trilogy in hardback and a four-volume trilogy in softback because the last volume was too fat for the format, but it is effectively a single story). He has produced very little in the meantime, although he has managed to get married, move to England, and, I think, move back to the US again, all of which is kind of time-consuming. Now, at last, we have something new, and it is every bit of the doorstep we have come to expect.

But it is not fantasy, or is it?

On the face of it, *Otherworld* is a fairly straightforward cyberpunk novel. Much of the action takes place in cyberspace, the cast has an expectedly international feel to it, and the bad guys are big businessmen with bigger ideas. So far, so conventional.

And Tad, being a writer of not inconsiderable talent, manages all this very well. The characters are interesting, particularly the South Africans, and the plot not entirely transparent. It is one of those books where you start off following a number of different threads but you know that all the characters are going to get together in the end, and so they do, but so what.

There are an awful lot of pages between the start and the final meeting of the various strands, but very few of them are wasted. There are times when I wonder how Tad manages to generate quite so many words, and I'm sure his editors despair of him. The plot doesn't seem to advance all that much, but nevertheless you are held in the story and hardly notice the length. I had the advantage of having a holiday over which to read it, but I think if I hadn't I would have found myself sneaking the odd paragraph during breaks at work.

Aside from the story, what interested me most about the book was that it seemed blessedly free of obsession with technology. This may seem strange for a cyberpunk book, but there it was. Tad had obviously done some research - he knew what cyberspace was and how it worked - but beyond a fairly layman's introduction he didn't spend a lot of time talking about it. There were no drugs, precious little violence, and absolutely no comment on weapons technology. I can't remember any character in the book actually wielding a gun, except for the security guards that followed the bad guys around to business meetings and stuff.

So what is it about? Well, in part, it is about the nature of reality. It is asking whether we can create a world in cyberspace which is as real as the one we live in now, and whether doing so has any useful or moral purpose. It seems plausible that the bad guys' plan is to trap everyone inside a super-realistic cyber-world in which they, as controllers of the programmes, would literally be gods. This is the downside. On the upside, Tad shows how virtual reality can give life to people whose physical disabilities preclude them from taking any active part in our world. He is also toying with the idea of using cyberspace to recreate lost worlds such as those of the Aztecs or the African Bushmen. Could such an artificial world ever be as valid as the real one it mimics, and if not, is it worth doing anyway? This is not a trivial question.

But, as I have said, aside from this philosophical enquiry into the uses of VR technology, the story has only the outermost trappings of cyberpunk, not the grimy detail. And in the end the characters are left trapped in the bad guys' VR world, a situation little different from having walked through the back of a wardrobe and found yourself 'somewhere else'.

As Arthur C. Clarke once said, technology which is sufficiently complex is indistinguishable from magic. Therefore, by definition, an SF novel in which the technology is complex and unexplained is indistinguishable from a fantasy novel. And that is what Tad seems to have written: a fantasy novel with the cyberpunk flavour. Anyone who is interested primarily in the technology would probably find the book disappointing, but those of us who enjoy a good yarn, with interesting characters, and don't much care about the setting, should be well pleased.

Caveat: despite being very long, this book is only the first part of the story. There is a lot more to come, and people who hate being left hanging should avoid it until the other books are out.

Otherworld - Tad Williams - Legend - trade paperback

In search of Popular Culture

William Gibson, the Australian newspaper told us the other week, is known as 'the man who invented cyberspace'. This is an heady accolade, not only because it wasn't entirely his own work - he sees himself more as having produced a synthesis of ideas already current at the time he wrote *Neuromancer* - but also because he isn't really interested in computers at all. What is he is interested in is the world around him: its people, their foibles, and the societies they construct. *Idoru* is a pretty weak attempt at a cyberpunk thriller, and has been deservedly caned as such. But it is also an attempt at a social study of three modern phenomena: media personalities, the journalism that lives off them, and the teen fan clubs that worship them. Along the way, Gibson asks us what it means to be famous, and whether certain types of fame are more valid than others.

Kathy Torrance, the epitome of tabloid journalism, has fixed ideas about fame. Most famous people, she points out to her acolyte, Colin Laney, are not famous in their own right, they are famous because the media have made them so. Gone are the Lawrence Oliviers, the Bing Crosbys, the Humphrey Bogarts, even the Elvis Presleys. Nowadays, just as Andy Warhol predicted, everyone can be famous for 15 minutes, and probably for no more because their fame is given to them, and taken away, by the media.

Rez, one half of the superstar rock duo, Lo/Rez, is the exception to Kathy's theory. He is famous, massively so, and has been for ages, largely on the strength of his own talent, and that of his guitarist partner Lo. He is, perhaps, the kind of throwback that Torrance would approve of, but in fact she hates him with a vengeance. You see, Rez has never done any of the things that Torrance would need him to do in order for him to become part of her world: he doesn't take drugs, he doesn't wreck hotel rooms, he doesn't have stormy public rows with his record company, he doesn't even have a girlfriend. Not a whif of scandal has ever attached to him, until now.

In a seedy night club in Tokyo, Rez has made a surprise announcement. He is to marry. But his fiancée is not a fellow musician, not a wealthy heiress, a sexy actress, or even a beautiful young member of his world-wide fan club. Rez intends to marry an *Idoru*, a computer-generated image used to front the videos of faceless Japanese musi-technologists. He wants to marry a piece of software.

There is a lot to be made of this concept. Gibson does reasonable job in part. I particularly like his portrayal of Rez's fan club and its obsessive members. But much of the argument is treated superficially, and much of it is ruined by a plot that is not only limp but bears all the signs of having been fatally butchered in the editing. Somewhere there is a story about a nanotech assembler unit, stolen from America by Russian gangsters and smuggled away through Tokyo. Somehow that wondrous piece of technology becomes essential to the plans of Rez and his AI mistress. Just how that connection is made has been lost to us. It may still exist somewhere, lying cut and bleeding on the disk of some editor like an excised vital organ, or functioning reliably in a backed up earlier incarnation of the story. Just as likely it has found its way into the ultimate darkness of the Windows 95 recycle bin. We may never know the truth.

So we end up concentrating on other things. For me it was the Australian references in the book. Gibson visited our fair country in 1993 for Constantinople, the last great NatCon run in Melbourne. By all accounts he enjoyed himself, and we now know that he kept his eyes and ears

open whilst he was here. Certainly he drops place names as if he were intimately familiar with Melbourne. But I was a little worried by the image he seemed to have of Australians.

I don't think it was our fault, because Tad Williams had a very similar stereotype in mind when writing *Otherland*. In that book, one of the major villains is an assassin who has a hobby of brutally murdering young women. He comes from Sydney. In *Idoru*, one of the main characters is a bodyguard who discourages unwanted journalistic attentions on Rez by threatening to drive nails into the hands of the offending hacks, and actually cutting off their toes if they persist. He is a Tasmanian. Is this really what the rest of the world thinks of Australia? It is a scary concept.

Idoru - William Gibson - Viking - trade paperback

A Punnet of Raspberries

*Alice was beginning to feel very drowsy from having nothing to do. How strange it was that doing absolutely **nothing at all** could make one feel so tired. She slumped down even deeper into her armchair. Alice was visiting her Great Aunt Ermintrude's house in Didsbury, Manchester; a frightful city in the North of England which was full of rain and smoke and noise and big factories making Heaven-knows-what. "I wonder how you **do** make Heaven-knows-what?" thought Alice to herself, "perhaps they get the recipe from someone who's only recently died?"*

Once upon a time there was a man called Dodgson who enjoyed playing games with words. It is a habit he shares with many fans and fellow writers. Be it the Chaos Lord, Putkin, with his Cosmic Raspberry, the BASFA Pun Jar, or Rizzo the Rat God, Lord of Low Humour (where **did** you find that one, Fabian?), word games have exercised a hold over the fannish imagination since time immemorial. Mr Dodgson's books have held similar status since they were written, and his heroine, the delightfully innocent and curious young Alice Liddell, whose adventures took place mainly in bizarre, imagined worlds, has become an icon for the mind-stretching possibilities of Virtual Reality.

In an interview in *SFX* after the release of *Pollen*, Jeff Noon said that his Vurt works were inspired, in part, by Alice's adventures, and that the next volume in the series was provisionally entitled *The Looking Glass Wars*. That may be the case, but *Automated Alice* is not that book. Sure the book, heavily tongue in cheek, makes reference to things Vurtual and to the miraculous properties of the green and gold feathers of Whippoorwill the parrot. And the book is indeed set in Noon's beloved Manchester. But it is not a Vurt book, it is an exercise in punmanship.

Noon has set out to write a third Alice adventure, this time set in a more modern world peopled with technological concepts such as Terbots whose brains are small mounds of earth full of busy Computermite. It is a world in which the Newmonia plague has turned mankind into a race of anthropomorphic animals: not just the dog-people and cat-people that populate the Manchester of Vurt, but badger-people, zebra-people, plaice-people, and even snail-people and spider-people. Not forgetting, of course, the villainous Civil Serpents who seek to conquer the world through rules and regulations.

Is it science fiction? Why surely, for does it not treat of carryon particles and djinnetic engineering. Is it clever and funny? Why certainly. Is it cheeky? For sure, even down the appearance of the author who plays a cameo role as Zenith O'Clock, the writer who is beset by evil Crickets. Noon must have had a wonderful time writing it.

It is, of course, not the sort of thing that appeals to everyone. I suspect that many of the crickets will not be in the least impressed, though there are the usual gushing comments on the back cover. Thank the Goddess for publishers like Random House who are prepared to take a risk on this sort of stuff. It may be difficult to track down, but I think you will find it well worth it.

Automated Alice - Jeff Noon - Crown - hardback.

Back in the MSFC

It being high summer, the folks at MSFC have been making the best of the superb weather and partying hard. Recently we had the club barbecue. This was rather poorly attended, which was a shame because the park Justin chose is beautiful. Personally I would have preferred the more southerly boathouse as it is quieter and has fewer European trees, but we had a good time anyway.

After lunch several of us hired a boat and went for a row on the river. Terry wants me to tell you all how his muscles rippled and heaved as he rowed, so here I am telling you. I had a go too, and was pleased not to catch too many crabs, though I suspect that it was other parts of me that were heaving - I don't have any muscles.

The next weekend a bunch of us went for dinner at a pub in South Melbourne called the Maori Chief. It doesn't look much from the outside, and despite being close to fashionable Park Street, it seems isolated in a morass of flyovers and not-yet-demolished buildings that the renovation of the area has somehow by-passed. This is good for us, because it means fewer people will find this little gem.

The first good thing to note about it is that, being a pub, it has decent beer at reasonable prices. Terry and I found Coopers, Redback and, wonder of wonders, Stella. UK readers may be a little surprised at my delight here, but Aussie beer has a little way to go. It is not all as bad as Fosters, but there is little to compare with good European beers.

The food was excellent too. I had a starter of grilled squid in a garlic sauce which I must find the recipe for. And the impecunious amongst you will be well fed on a Humungous Burger for only \$8 (you'd pay that for a Big Mac meal in London).

We'd heard nasty things about the decor, and there were indeed formica-covered tables, but it was all part of a late 50s/early 60s theme to the place. There were chairs covered in leopard spot fabric, things made out of Bakelite, even music to match. Terry was in his element, especially after they were able to comply with a request for a Dean Martin album.

Despite us coming in in dribs and drabs, there were none of the disasters with orders we have seen in places like the Alaysia. Jocko even managed to order and receive a penne dish, which

feat members of the B5 Club will marvel at after the dramas of their November meeting (he ordered penne, got gnocchi instead, complained, and got another gnocchi in its place). After the meal most of us repaired to the comfy chairs (lounge music, lounge atmosphere) and chatted late into the night. We will definitely be back.

Of course, some of us are party animals to the core and can't sit still for long. (More to the point, if I had, I'd have fallen asleep). So Terry and I headed off for the Midsumma street party in Brunswick. This was largely a gay & lesbian affair, and the place was packed with interesting outfits and hairdos, drag queens and assorted other alternative people. It was great being in such a happy and uninhibited crowd.

We met up with Michael Jordan and a few other MSFC people. Michael was desperate for a bop and somehow we ended up on this really crowded dance floor listening to very bad disco music, and very bad disco re-mixes of good disco music. It is not often I am driven off a dance floor by the awfulness of the music, but this time I suddenly developed a craving for a coffee and found that most of the others had the same problem. It was a good night, however. Heck, I didn't get home until gone 2:00 in the morning, I must have been having a good time.

Next on the list is an expotition to a restaurant in Richmond called the Rio Grande. Jan and I discovered this one on New Year's Day. I'd been leafing through the new Yellow Pages and had found this place which advertised American food, including buffalo and prairie dog. We had to investigate. As it turned out, we were the only people there (the rest of Melbourne being too drunk or too broke for another night on the town). With Jan being from Arizona and me with my passion for Mexican food, we attracted the attention of the chef. Three hours later we had chatted with our new friend, Andy, about all sorts of things from recipes to Australian tastes in food to American immigration laws to how to shoot a prairie dog. We also discovered that Andy is an SF fan.

Sadly the hordes the night before had cleaned Andy out of buffalo steaks (believe it or not, there is a farm on the NSW border near Wodonga that raises the animals), so I tried the prairie dog instead. It wasn't the actual animal, but rather pork medallions cooked the way the Navajo would cook a prairie dog. Wild animals tend to be very low on fat and the meat dries out very quickly if you are not careful, so the trick is to wrap it in a piece of skin. Andy uses pork meat and lamb skin, and the result is delicious. Jan tried the Arizona ribs and pronounced them excellent.

In addition to the fascinating Navajo, Mexican and Texan recipes, the restaurant also adds to the theme with the decor. There are tee-pees, saddles, feather head-dresses, and a mural of Monument Valley. I thought it was a great place, and so I arranged for a deputation of fannish persons to check it out with a view to running events there. In the end we had ten people, including the newly arrived and newly wed Giulia and Steve. Andy did us a banquet meal which allowed us to sample a wide range of different dishes, and a good time was had by all. Better still, it only cost us \$19 a head, plus whatever drink we brought with us. Melbourne fans should keep a look out for an announcement of another trip there.

The final (I hope) social event of January was the party I hosted for Giulia and Steve. It had occurred to me that they would be here on a Saturday which was also Burns Night, a traditional Scottish festival loosely based on the concept of Robert Burns' birthday but is actually a good

excuse to consume lots of haggis and whisky. This seemed like an ideal opportunity to educate my Aussie friends and introduce them to the delights of one of the world's most unfairly maligned foods.

The party itself seemed to go off pretty well, or so everyone told me, but backstage it was one of those domestic disasters that you only ever see in sit-coms. Everything I touched seemed to go wrong somehow, and if Terry hadn't come round in the afternoon to help out my guests would probably have arrived to find me sat waist-deep in a pool of tears doing my best to impersonate a squonk.

The minor culinary disasters I shall gloss over as they are the sort of thing that would happen to anyone trying to cook British food on a day where the outside temperature was 28C and that in the kitchen considerably higher. Pastry and stuff just doesn't behave the way it should - for example it has a nasty habit of drying out and becoming crumbly before you have a chance to roll it out. Some of the other stuff, however, was quite spectacular.

Much of the blame can be laid at the door of a flan dish I had bought earlier in the week due to having left my normal one at Lillian's in a fit of absent-mindedness. This dish was one of those things that has a removable bottom, and it was a very loose fit. The first disaster happened to a Partan Flan (crab quiche). As I was taking it out of the oven, the ring decided to detach itself and make a beeline for my unprotected arm. Not wishing to suffer a nasty burn, I made a snap decision and dropped everything. The flan ended up on the floor, and the hot metal ring cut a hole in one of my toes. Whilst I rushed for the bathroom dripping blood, Terry nobly cleaned up the mess.

The flan dish's second disaster occurred with the Queen Mary Tart. Here a small gap in the pastry allowed filling to seep out from the gap between base and ring and dribble onto the oven floor, resulting in a bubbling, foaming blob of charred matter which oozed and gurgled over the inside of the oven, emitting a foul, burning stench as it did so. Once again, Terry came to the rescue. I was beginning to consider swearing off cooking for life.

The party itself took a while to get going, but a goodly crowd turned up and transformed my series of disasters into a fairly successful evening. Thanks are due in particular to Bekky and H for the splendid platter of fruit, and to Tracy and Wendy for the fascinating cheese and pear thing. Thanks also to Robert Jan for bringing his book of *Bawdy Songs and Poems Written and Collected by Robert Burns*, some of which had even Terry's mind boggling. Steve took a selection of photos taken with his splendid new digital camera (well, what do you expect a *Polka* editor to buy on a trip that involves passing duty free shops), some of which will doubtless find their way to my web page in due course.

It was all beginning to seem as if my friends had rescued the occasion. It was well gone midnight, people were beginning to drift off, and I decided to do a bit of washing up. I put some stuff in the sink, filled it with water, and guess what? The hot tap refused to turn off.

Terry and Michael Jordan had a look and pronounced it a dead washer. We had neither the spares nor the tools to fix it - I wasn't even sure where the stop cock was - so I called an emergency plumber. Fortunately he came fairly quickly and fixed it in a matter of minutes. The new part cost me \$2. The call out charges amounted to \$130.

By the end of the evening I was a complete nervous wreck. Michael provided a badly needed shoulder when my eyes decided to come out in sympathy with the tap, and everyone else was wonderfully understanding. Other than Giulia and Steve, who could not escape their hysterical

hostess, they drifted off quietly and stood outside waiting for the plumber to make sure he found the flat. The first thing he said to me when he got to the flat was what a nice bunch of friends I had. I couldn't agree more. Thank you people, you were wonderful.

Looking further into the future, on April 11th the club will be having an H.P. Lovecraft night. Terry and I will be providing suitably fishy food, including chili fried tentacles. There will be a "worst piece of Lovecraftian prose" competition (which you can write yourself if you feel up to it) and various other dark and unspeakable things that Man was Never Meant To Know.

We are also planning a panel on the role of chocolate in fandom. This is sure to be well attended, it being a subject close to the hearts of so many people I know. Nor is chocolate addiction confined to Australians. If there is anyone out there with a good fannish chocolate anecdote, please let me know. If I get a good selection we'll turn it into an article for *Ethel*.

And finally in the forthcoming events, on May 9th the MSFC celebrates it's 45th birthday. We are the second oldest continuously running SF club in the world (only LASFS is older) and we are planning a big party to celebrate. We are hoping to get as many past members of the club along as possible, and as an additional carrot there will be a presentation by the Aussiecon Three board.

Anything but duff

Last issue a few people asked me what on Earth I meant by endorsing Janice Murray for "DUFF". Sometimes I forget that not all of my readers are well versed in fannish traditions. Herewith, the explanation.

DUFF stands for the Down Under Fan Fund, a Fan Fund being a charity which exists for the purpose of fostering international fannish relations by paying for fans to travel overseas. DUFF is concerned with moving fans between US and Australian fandom. Last year the fund paid for Perry Middlemiss to attend L.A.con III and to tour the US. This year it is the turn of a US fan to come here, and whoever wins will get to come over for Basicon in September.

The fund works entirely on the basis of donations. In particular, if you wish to vote for someone, you must pay a small sum into the fund (US\$4 or AU\$6). Fund administrators also hold auctions and the like to raise money. The lucky person who wins is expected to be a good ambassador for her country, to write a full and entertaining trip report, and to administer the fund in her country for the next two years.

This year's race has three candidates, and I'm backing Janice for several reasons. Firstly she is a very good friend of mine. Second, she has already proved her commitment to international fannish relations (for example, see Michael Jordan's article in *Ethel* about his trip to Seattle). She also has a good track record of interest in Australia, having been a member of *ANZAPA* for some time and having helped run Australia in 99 bid parties. Janice is also the US agent for *Ansible*, *Thyme* and *Ethel*. And knowing Janice, if she did get to Basicon, she'd end up doing panels and helping run the convention.

The other well known name on the ballot, Andy Hooper, is also from Seattle. Andy is the founder and principal editor of *Apparatchik*, an Hugo-nominated fanzine with an impressive reputation. *Apak*, as it is known, is one of the few fanzines in the world with a better production schedule than *Emerald City*. It is published every three weeks (I think it used to be every two) and is now into the seventies on issue numbers. The quality of writing is generally very good, and Andy now has a wide range of agents and contributors around the world. The Australian agent is Irwin Hirsch who can be found at 26 Jessamine Avenue, East Prahran, Vic 3181.

One of Andy's more regular contributors is Dr. Gregory Benford. Yes, that is right, one of the main guests of honour at Aussiecon Three. When the Worldcon victory was announced, a lot of people in Melbourne said "Greg who?", which is a shame because the guy has a lot to offer. His books do tend towards the hard science end of the SF spectrum, but that is because he works as an astrophysicist and most of the ideas in his books are based on his own research and theories, mainly about the structure of the galactic centre. And Greg is a fan as well. *Apak* is not the only fanzine I've seen his name listed in. There are few SF writers in the world who can also boast top notch scientific credentials and a fannish track record. I think he will be an excellent guest.

But, to get back to *Apak* and Andy's candidature, I'm sure Andy will do a good job if he wins, although he says he's not too serious about the race. I note that he is DJ-ing the disco at Potlach. This is a serious test of a man's taste. I'll report back in a couple of issues.

And finally, the other candidate is Joel Zakem. I don't know the guy, though he sounds interesting from his manifesto. I wish him the best of luck. With Stephen Boucher and Dick & Leah Smith amongst his nominators, he's going to need it.

Guest Editorial

by Steve Davies

Well, my deepest thanks to Cheryl for allowing us space both in *Emerald City* and, more importantly, in her flat. But first a word from our sponsor... It's *Plokta*, not *Plotka*, *Polkta*, *Polkat* or *Apltok*... Having got that out of the way, I'd like to say what a wonderful time we've been having in Melbourne. The food, the wine, ~~the heat, the flies~~, the hordes of friendly fans, not to mention the bottomless supplies of haggis and malt whisky at Cheryl's Burns Night party (which, despite the list of calamities recorded above, went off very well and a great time was had by all).

It's been a lot of fun and both Giulia and I are looking forward to coming back soon (unfortunately, my overdraft is going to have to go on a bread and water diet first...) and having fun getting everyone else's names wrong. Meanwhile, selected cleaned-up episodes of our trip report are going to be appearing in *Plokta* Real Soon Now. If you get *Emerald City* and you want to see *Plokta* in the hope of seeing your name in print, or your face immortalised by the infamous digital camera, either email us at plokta@vraidex.demon.co.uk, try our web page (<http://www.fuggles.demon.co.uk/plokta>) or snail-mail us at Plokta, 52 Westbourne Terrace, Reading, Berks RG30 2RP, UK and we'll send you a copy. If you want to keep seeing copies

("these Australians are crazy, Asterix...") then send us a LoC or a copy of your fanzine or something. We no longer accept first-born children in trade as we currently have a surplus.

Footnote

Well, I can now manage to ping emcit.com, and the web page is coming along very, very slowly, so with any luck, shortly after you receive this, you will be able to check it out for yourselves.

For Australian readers, it is awards time again. Ditmar and ASFMA nomination forms are available from various places including Slow Glass and the MSFC. I say Australian readers guardedly because the rules make it clear that only citizens and permanent residents are eligible to be nominated. This means that I, and *Emerald City*, are not eligible, but that Giulia, and quite possibly *Plokta*, are. Personally I think this is rather silly, and Marc Ortleib, who is administering the Ditmars this year, agrees. Fortunately the rules also say that the Administrator has the final say on matters of eligibility, so you can nominate and vote for me if you wish. Provided, of course, that you nominate and vote for Terry first. No one will have any respect for these awards unless the most deserving person wins.

Sometime during February - my beloved employers have still not made up their minds when - I shall be jetting off over the Pacific again. The next issue will therefore be a "road" issue (well, an air one to be precise). I will be dropping in on my second fannish home of BASFA and will be found promoting the San Francisco in 2002 Worldcon bid at Boskone and Potlach. If I am really lucky and can persuade my employers to find sufficient work for me I will also turn up at Corflu and at the UK Eastercon (which is in Manchester, a frightful city in the North of England which is full of rain, smoke.....). The February issue of *Emerald City* will be published at Potlach.

Music for this issue was provided by the dance tapes that I made up for the party and star an eclectic mix of primarily eighties throwbacks including the Eurythmics, the Pretenders, Cyndi Lauper, the Human League, the Thompson Twins, Jim Steinman, Elvis Costello, Talking Heads, Culture Club, and, of course, Frankie Goes to Hollywood and just about everything else that Trevor Horn has had a hand in. The ever so wonderful Merril Bainbridge is about the only modern star that got the nod.

And now, it being far to warm to do anything energetic, I am going to bed.

Goodnight,

Cheryl