

NOT



November 2001

NOW

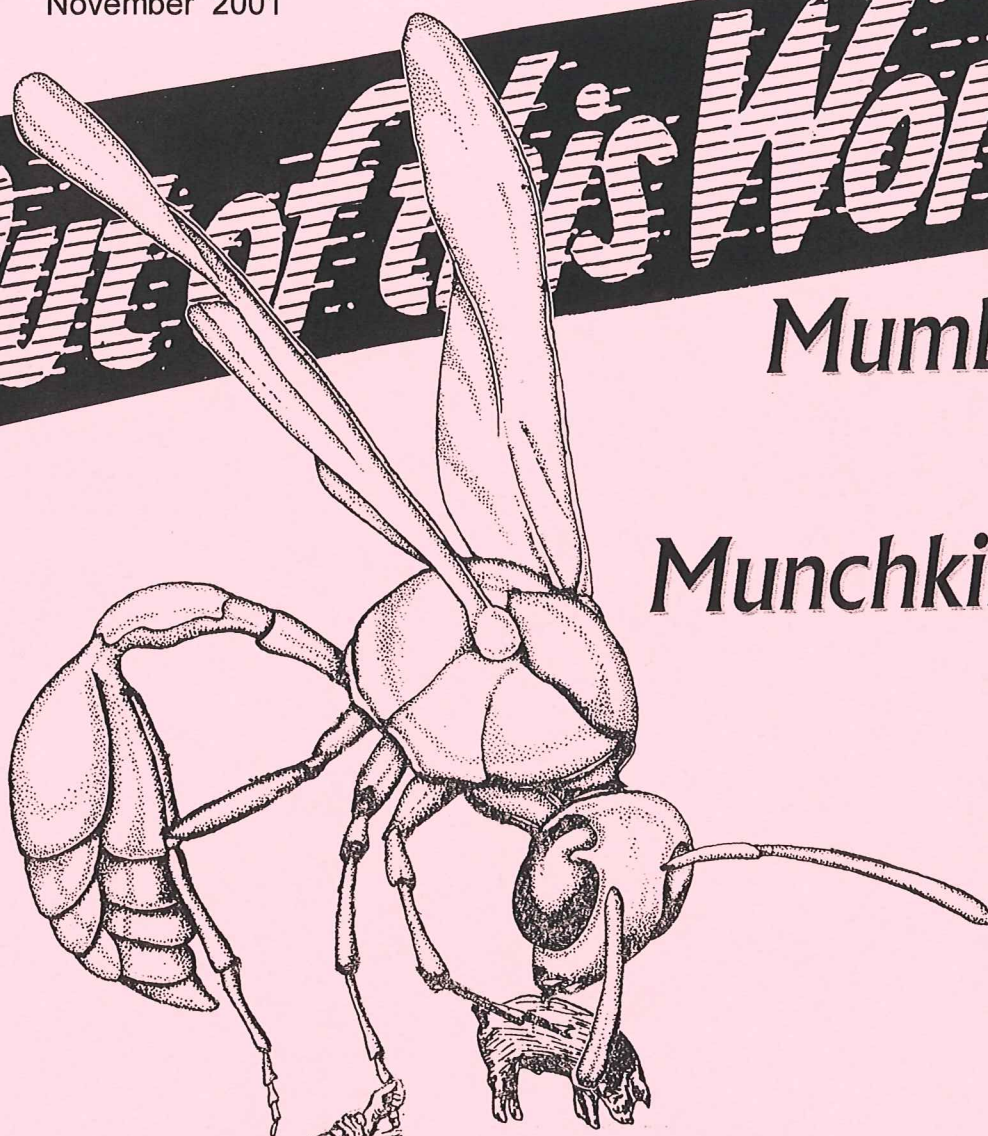
ONLY

20

SENE

Out of this World

Mumblings from Munchkinland 18



Mumblings from Munchkinland – the only West Australian fanzine published in Samoa – wishes its readers a Merry Christmas!

A CHANGE AS GOOD AS A HOLIDAY



Talofa mai Samoa 'o le fatu o le Polenisia.
Meaning: G'day from Samoa, the Heart of Polynesia.



In August I left the Australian Maritime College to take up the position of Senior Librarian at the Alafua Campus of the University of the South Pacific. USP is a curious and probably unique institution, serving the tertiary education needs of its 12 member countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The main campus of the university, and the great majority of its students and faculties, are in Fiji. The School of Law is situated in Vanuatu and the School of Agriculture, Samoa. Smaller Centre offices are located in all of the other member nations.

Much of this we had known already for several years. Shortly after starting at the Maritime College in 1993, I had seen an ad for a cataloguing position at the main campus of USP. We were tempted. Sure, they had had a military coup in Fiji in 1987 (two, really) but things seemed to have settled down and opportunities to work overseas were limited. But we felt it was too early to move again and, as it turned out, staying in Tasmania was the best thing that could have happened to us. I was promoted within a few years, Megan and I had three lovely Taswegians, and we had a great time exploring the Apple Isle (well, the parts accessible to small children, anyway).

In recent years, though, and particularly when we knew Ruby was on her way, we had been thinking of moving on. Perth appealed to us because of its warmer climate and the grandparental assistance we would be able to call upon from time to time. My mum started sending job advertisements from *The West Australian* and we kept an eye on the vacancies listed in *The Australian*.

It was in *The Oz* in September 2000 that I noticed the USP advertisement for my present job. I was not immediately very excited. Just four months earlier, the political situation in Fiji had heated up again, culminating in yet another coup -- not the sort of place you want to take a young family -- and as I've said, our thoughts were directed west rather than east. Still, I read the ad through and noticed that the position was based in Samoa rather than Fiji, so I mentioned it to Megan, half-whimsically. She responded in kind and we joked about it for a while before deciding that, what the hell, I might as well send in an application and we would see what happened.

What happened next was nothing. For a long time.

The weekend after sending off my application, my horoscope read that a change involving travel to a distant place was in the stars. I don't make a point of looking at horoscopes and have never believed in astrology, so thought of this as nothing more than a funny coincidence. A week or so later, while browsing through a secondhand bookstore, I found a copy of the Lonely Planet guide to Samoa. Not long after I was chatting to a recently married colleague at work and he mentioned that they had just returned from honeymooning in a beautiful South Pacific island nation. Had I ever heard of Samoa?

I began to wonder if the Gods were sending me omens. Was our leap into the brave new millennium to be an adventure in time *and* space? And if so, how soon might it happen? The October deadline for applications suggested that USP was seeking to fill the post before the start of first semester in 2001. Shortlisted candidates might therefore be asked over for interviews, probably before the end of the year. If this was so, and I was lucky enough to be among them, there was even a slim possibility of taking the family over for a Christmas holiday.

This was all idle speculation, of course. We had heard nothing back from the university yet and dull logic said that this was most probably because they were not even considering me. Still, logic can't stop one from musing. The idea of being in Samoa even briefly led to another train of thought –

could I publish a Samoan issue of *Mumblings*? The notion appealed to me. Even more so when I realized soon after that any fanzine published in Samoa just before the end of the year would almost certainly be the very last fanzine of the 20th century! Great Ghu! The awesome responsibility!

Fortunately for my ego, no word came from Fiji before the end of the year. Life moved on. Ruby occupied a lot of our time. Several emails I sent enquiring into the progress of my application were met with polite but non-committal replies. My opportunity to become an historical footnote in Harry Warner's next volume of fanhistory passed. Towards the end of January, USP effectively said "Stop bothering us, we'll call you if we want you." Visions of swaying palm trees and white sandy beaches evaporated. My folks came to see us and tour Tasmania again. Work began on the new branch library AMC had decided to build. Status quo reigned.

Just after Easter, I received a phone call at work from a woman claiming to be Esther Williams. Before I could enquire whether she was still diving, she asked me if I was still interested in the position at USP I had applied for (seven months previously). *Must not be the same Esther Williams*, I thought, and replied that I might be.

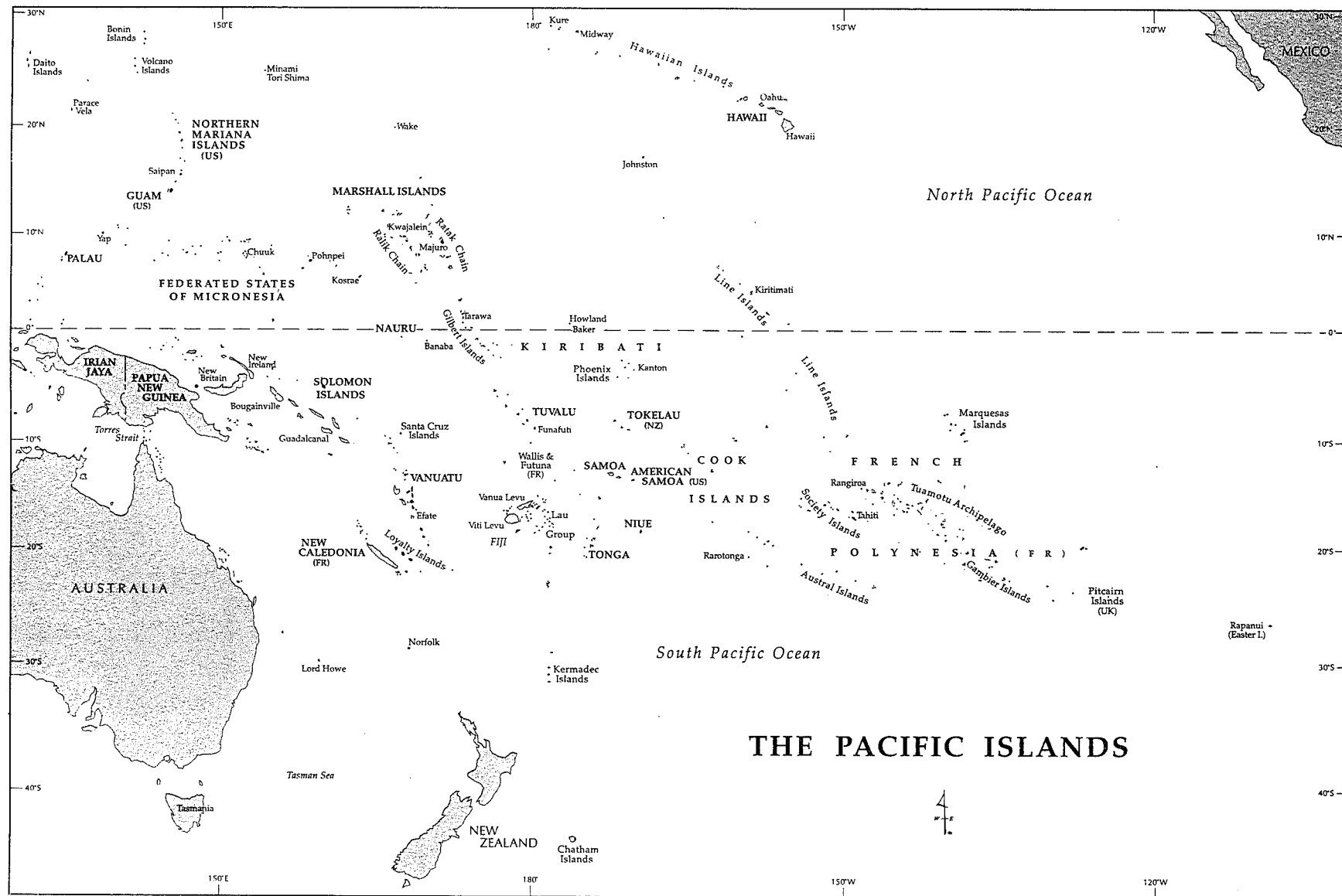
Well, you can guess that they offered and I accepted. And you can deduce from the last *Mumblings* that getting here took us the best part of another four months. There was a long delay in getting a contract to me to sign and I did not resign from the AMC before this occurred, though I did explain to my boss and a few others what was happening. Then there were the usual hassles with moving -- deciding what to take, what to store and what to junk. Eight years in one place and three kids in that time certainly magnified the amount of stuff we possessed. We had to decide what to do with our house -- tricky, because we didn't (and don't) know if we'll return to Launceston in the future, but we had little time to organise a sale. We decided to rent.

Getting quotes from removalists became a problem because of conditions USP stated we had to assert, until we realised that they weren't that bothered by their own rules. Then there was a fiasco over booking our flights, for similar reasons, which resulted in USP allowing the flights we had booked to lapse without telling us that they had rebooked virtually identical ones!

And it was a busy time at AMC, since that new branch library, which I initially thought I'd never see, was completed in record time. It was a nice send-off, actually, to have the official opening of the new building just a few weeks before we left. These final weeks were dreadful, however, because of our anxiety over all of the above, coupled with physical exhaustion from packing frantically to meet removalist deadlines. I had just finished putting up a range of new shelving bays, too, so we could finally get all of our books out of boxes. Most of them went straight back in.

We spent our last two nights in Launceston in accommodation generously provided by the College. Quite spectacular, really, as they gave us the executive suite in Newnham Hall, one of the Heritage Trust-listed colonial buildings maintained on campus. A pity we couldn't appreciate it more. The girls had been ill, one after the other, earlier in the week and Megan and I thought we had escaped it. The day before our departure, with some considerable packing still to be done, we both woke up early with the runs. A number of colleagues, my boss included, rallied to help us finish the job even as the trucks arrived to take the remaining boxes into storage.

The rest was relatively easy. We bid farewell to Launceston the next day and spent the next few days recuperating at Megan's mum's house in Melbourne. Then it was on to another plane to Auckland, where we spent a pleasant couple of hours catching up with her brother and his family in the airport before hopping on our final flight to Apia. We arrived at 1 am on the morning of the same day we'd left Melbourne, courtesy of the International Date Line. Our first impressions of Samoa were thus limited to warmth and overwhelming humidity. Ruby and Lauren, exhausted from the long day of travel, dropped their bundles in the airport baggage area. Guess whose bags were last off the plane? We were relieved when Customs waved us through and a USP van met us outside the terminal.



We spent the next few days and nights in a hotel. The assumption was that we would appreciate the air-conditioning available there. In actual fact, hopping in and out of this led to snuffles all round. The hotel was Western-style – brick box construction allowing poor airflow, so it might have been too hot to allow us to sleep without the air-conditioning, especially just after our arrival. However, much as the kids enjoyed the hotel swimming pool, we were quite happy to move to the house that USP provided after several days and find that it had ceiling fans instead.

They say that location is everything in real estate. We were at first concerned at where the house was because it seemed to be a fair way out of the centre of Apia. In fact, it is probably less than 5 km, but we were without a vehicle and this is too far to walk in the tropical heat, particularly if Megan wanted to go for shopping. Even before we acquired a vehicle, however, we had grown accustomed to the site. It is in a beautiful spot, nestled at the base of the rainforested slopes of Mt. Vaea, and it's convenient for me because it is within walking distance of my workplace. It is also relatively quiet at night – the loudest sound is often the rush of wind rustling palm and banana-tree leaves up the valley. It took us a while to distinguish this sound from that of approaching rain.

It rains plenty, of course. We are just now into the start of the wet season (it's a bit late this year, they tell us) and the last few days have seen rain pouring almost non-stop. When it does stop, the warmth usually forces water vapour out of the vegetation almost immediately, increasing the humidity again and wreathing Mt. Vaea in low mists.

The house stands on a bedrock of ancient coral limestone overlain here and there by flows of black volcanic basalt. Soils arising from this mixture and the detritus of decaying vegetation are extremely fertile. Combined with the regular rainfall, the resultant growth rate of plants here is phenomenal. And there are other reminders of how young and active the entire environment is. The first few earthquakes we experienced were at night and they were of sufficient magnitude to wake me up – but not anybody else in the family. They didn't believe me until one occurred during the day.

I'd been expecting some quakes, for Samoa lies just off the pivot point upon which the Pacific Plate is grinding around and under the Indian Plate. To the south lies the deep Tongan Trench, marking the subduction zone between the two tectonic plates. The volcanic activity arising from this slow but persistent motion was evident here until the blink of an eye, geologically speaking. The "big island" of Savai'i witnessed eruptions as recently as 1911.

Savai'i also caught the brunt of another form of natural disaster – twice within two years, in fact – when cyclones Ofa and Val struck the islands a decade ago. A number of villages were completely destroyed and damage was extensive on both major islands. On Upolu, the tidal surge associated with the first cyclone also caused extensive flooding. Such events have shaped Samoa's history before.

As you can see from the map opposite, Samoa lies smack dab in the middle of Polynesia. To the east lie the islands of American Samoa. Collectively they were known to Europeans first as The Navigator Islands, named by Bougainville in 1768, and there remained no need to distinguish the two until the colonial era, when the Germans, British and Americans had various bunfights over who owned what. In early 1899 warships of all three foreign nations were lying at harbour off Apia when a huge typhoon swept through the islands, sinking all but one British vessel. Their resolve to fight somewhat reduced, the three would-be great powers signed a treaty in December securing the eastern islands for the USA, the western islands to Germany and disputed territories elsewhere to the Poms.

It's commonly stated that the two Samoas have developed quite differently as a result. I'll leave any comments on this until we've had a chance to visit American Samoa. What I can say is that Western Samoa, after decades of colonial post-war (WWI and WWII) rule by New Zealand authorities, was the first South Pacific nation to return to self-governance, in 1962. The people here are still extremely proud of this. They dropped "Western" from their name in 1997, apparently much to the annoyance of the American Samoans.

[continued on p.15]

ELFIE ANNA KOCH, 1909 – 2001

In 1909, William Taft became President, elected by the majority of male voters in all 46 of the United States. Nobody paid income taxes. Some drove Henry Ford's new mass-produced horseless carriage, the Model T, and a handful had demonstrated the magic of those new flying machines. Vaudeville was king, but nickelodeons were rapidly gaining in popularity. Robert Peary became the first man to stand at the North Pole. Marconi shared the Nobel Prize for physics with Karl Braun for their work on wireless telegraphy (an event applauded, no doubt, by readers of magazines like Hugo Gernsback's *Modern Electrics*). The total population of the world was well under 2 billion people.

From September 7, 1909, that population included Elfie Anna Carlson.

In 2001, George W. Bush became President, elected by a minority of voters of both sexes. Income tax was central to his campaign. The automobile was ubiquitous and a major contributor to pollution around the world. Modern airliners routinely passed over the North Pole and a handful of religious fanatics demonstrated how they could be used as instruments of terror and destruction. Television and the Internet flashed scenes of this almost instantaneously to most of the planet's inhabitants, which now numbered well over 6 billion.

After October 20, 2001, Elfie Anna Koch (née Carlson) ceased to be among them.

Elfie was my maternal grandmother. She lived through remarkable times, in a world repeatedly transformed by technological, social and political change. What she thought of her life, I can't pretend to know – I was around for less than half of it, after all. But she enjoyed talking to us about her earlier days, so here's just a little of what I will remember about her:

Gran's early life was not ideal for a small child. Her mother died when she was only three, along with a sibling, when complications arose after childbirth. Elfie was left with her Swedish-born father, Arvid, who enlisted the help of a variety of others in raising her, including her own maternal grandparents, who were very strict



Lutherans. They didn't allow such things as playing cards, but Elfie picked this up from her dad (along with his Swedish temperament). She could still speak some words in Swedish and was also interested in the history of the Carlson Clan, as an uncle dubbed it when doing some research on their ancestors in the 1950s.

She liked to tell us that as an office worker during the Prohibition era, one of her bosses supplemented his income by smuggling Canadian hooch over the border. And about this time she met Verner Koch; they eloped during the Depression to avoid an expensive marriage ceremony. For most of their lives, they lived on Kamerling Avenue on the west side of Chicago. This had been Vern's childhood home; as kids ourselves, we used to wonder at the coal chute and stories of the ice-block refrigerator. We also liked to scramble up and down the stairs, roll pool balls across Vern's table in the basement, or watch the lights of aircraft flying over at night, to or from O'Hare International, from the upstairs balcony. For most of their time in Chicago Vern and Elfie worked together for the same company, he as a master sheetmetal worker; she as the company book-keeper.

After we migrated in 1972, Gran was a regular letter writer. I was an avid stamp collector at this time and she often included used stamps that she and her friends had collected for me. Vern and Elfie also moved, after their retirement, to Florida -- this and Hawaii had been their favourite places to holiday for years. I thought of their trips to Hawaii when I saw a beach of black volcanic sand here in Samoa.

Vern's retirement was, unfortunately, very short-lived and Elfie was on her own after he passed away, so she decided to join us in Australia.

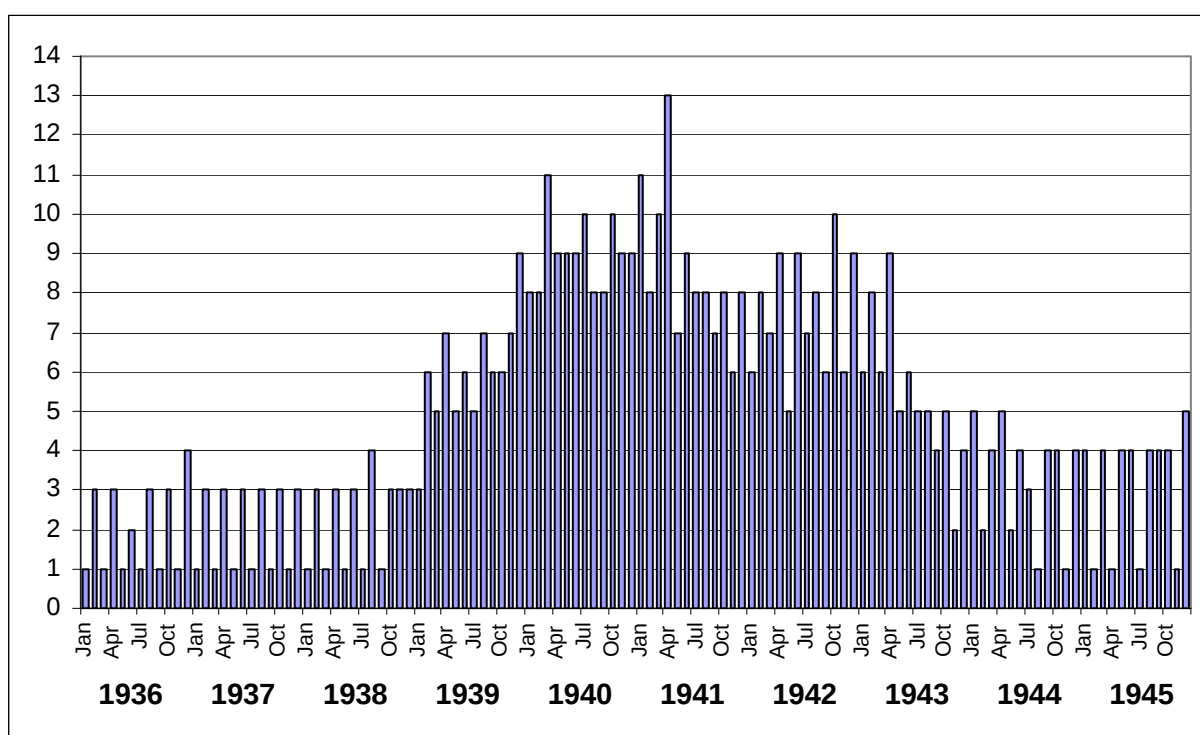
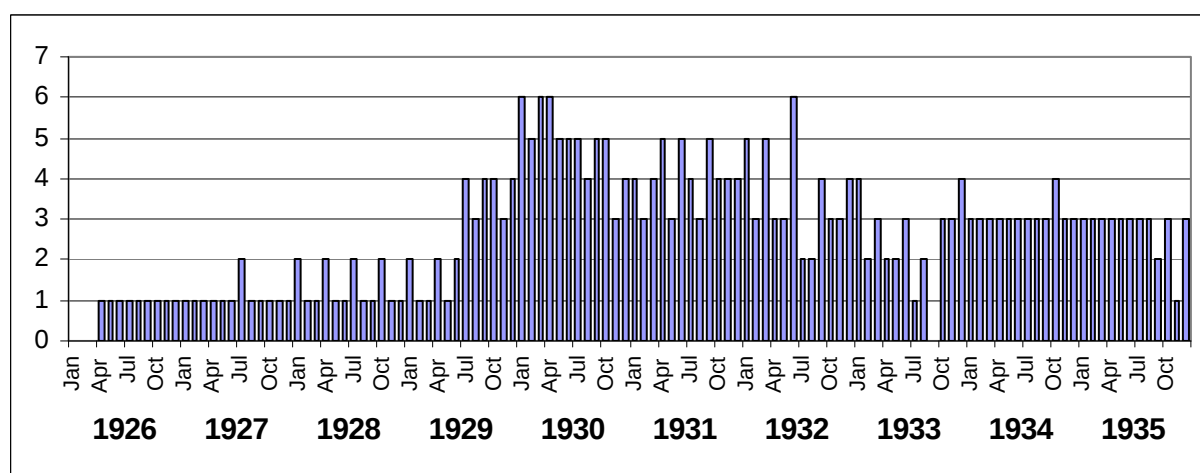
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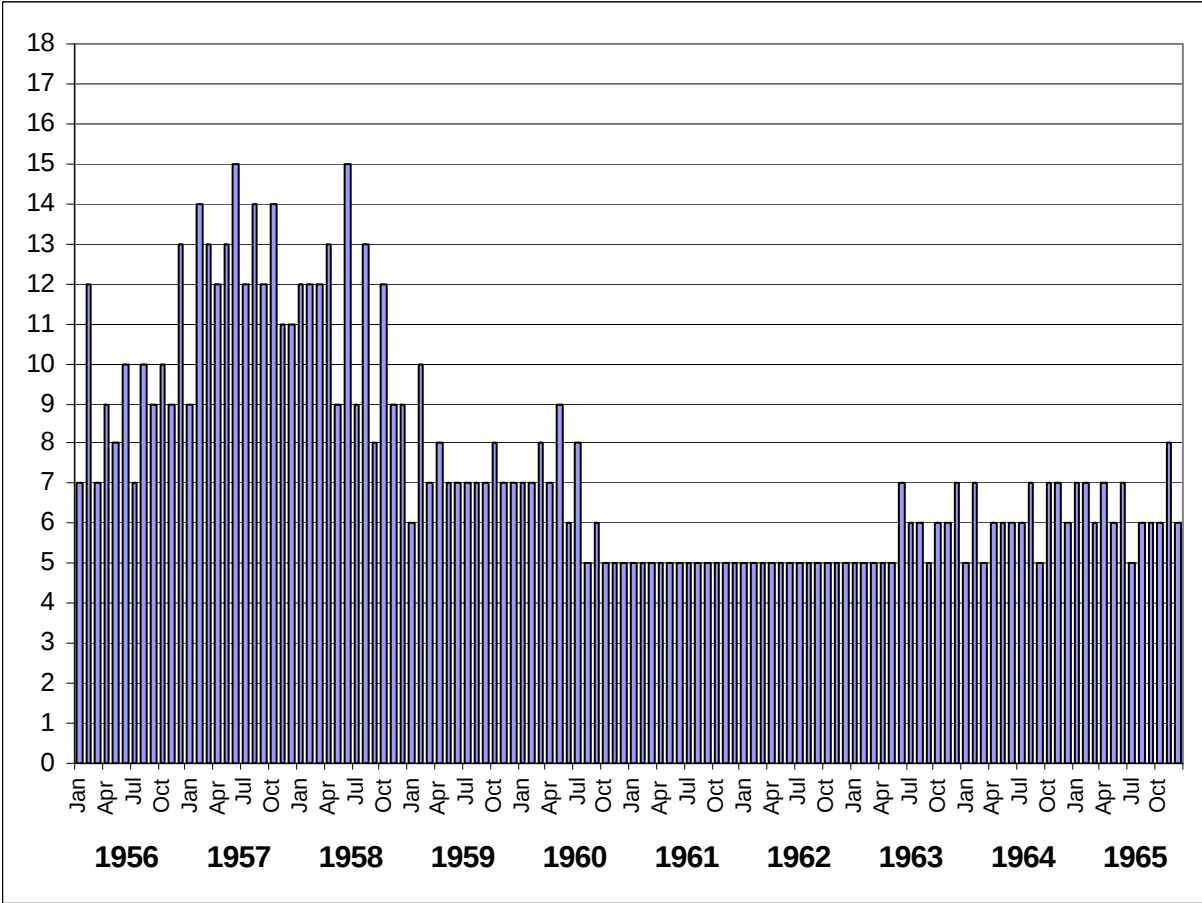
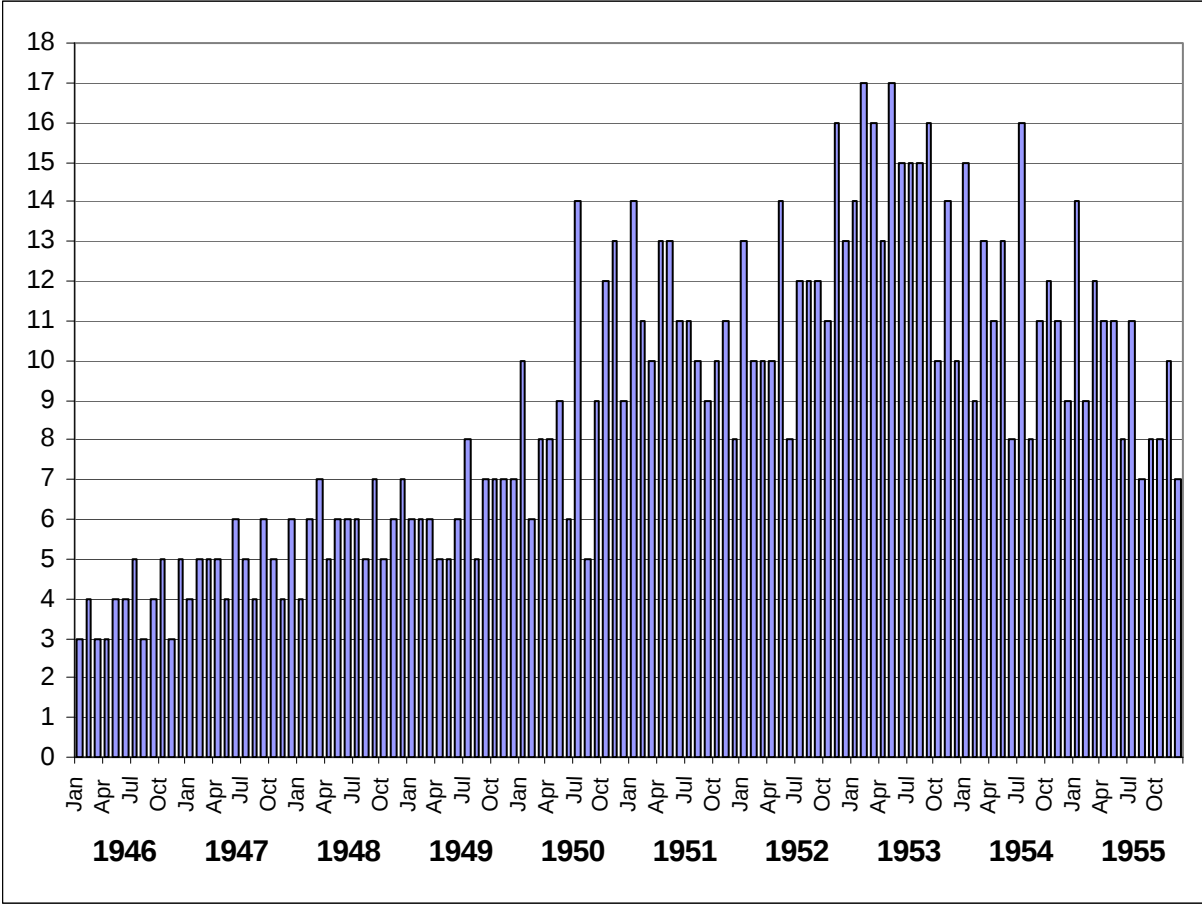
ADDENDUM TO TIMELINE OF AMERICAN SF MAGAZINES

After seeing the first section of my timeline in the last issue Alan Roberts asked whether a histogram of the number of magazines over the years had ever been done. Great minds think alike! I had done so on my original chart but couldn't fit it on the present sheets, so I take the opportunity to include a series of them now for the periods covered by the first and second sections of the timeline.

Figures show the total number of magazine *issues* per month as plotted on the timeline, not how many titles were being published. They are indicative only, based on which magazines I chose to chart (see the letters column for more on this, too). Remember also that most magazines would have been on the stands ahead of their cover dates. Issues with split month cover dates (eg. "April/May") have been counted under the first month. For those with seasonal dates, I have used the months listed by Tuck.

The histograms do show the relative numbers of magazines over the years, at least, and they are all to the same scale to make comparisons easy. So the magnitude of the peak in 1953 can be seen, as well as the low of September 1933. The very next month, the revived *Astounding* started its record run of consecutive issues, ensuring no further breaks in the monthly appearance of American sf magazines.





WHERE'S OSAMA?



(with apologies to Wally and Martin Handford)

THE READER SQUEAKS

Eric Lindsay, Airlie Beach, Qld.

21 June, 2001

Thanks for *Mumblings* 17, even if it does come from the wrong state.

[Country, now!]

The destruction of archeological material is hardly new. Avebury was mostly destroyed in the 18th Century, for instance, for building materials. However some of these things seem more like the wanton destructiveness of small children looking for attention.

[Well, they certainly attracted some attention on September 11...]

It was most welcome to actually see something from Don Tuck, setting straight the history of what happened in 1975. Like Bruce, I didn't know what had happened to make it impossible for Don Tuck to attend, didn't know whether he had been so upset by seeing a few fans that he disappeared there-after. It is wonderful to hear that he entertained Jack Chalker and Forry Ackerman. I recall that after Aussiecon a whole heap of fans came and stayed at my house. I think we ended up with 42 fans in total passing through in a very short time. I even found, just recently, a very moth eaten piece of paper with their signatures. (Hmm, wonder where I put it?)

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Graham Stone, Sydney, N.S.W.

21 June, 2001

Correction! Castellari tells, p.11 this issue [#17] of his son meeting Eric Russell and his daughter. Hey! I thought, Eric doesn't have kids, he was never married. So I phoned him. "That was my brother," he said, which was what I had guessed. "He has a daughter, she's now a Professor of Information Technology in Texas." Ted was in Electronics from about the time it began to be so called, with the ABC.

Roberts mentions a fan story by Bradbury about a posterior giving out radiation destroying brooms and ratchet handles. No, that was by Fred Pohl. Perhaps I can find it...

7 July, 2001

Wrong. It wasn't Pohl either but Damon Knight. Copy enclosed.

[For information: 'Twas "The End of Pennywhistle", in none other than Harry Warner's *Spaceways*, April 1941.]

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Alan Roberts, North Fitzroy, Vic.

22 June, 2001

Your data sheet on U.S. sf mags was very interesting, since it covers precisely the period in which I was a fan/collector. It is very noticeable how it reflects the vagaries of the economy over those years. The burgeoning boom in publication ran into the Great Depression, and battled through suffering losses, to reach a trough in what I have read was the worst year of all in the U.S., 1937, until partial recovery in late 38 to 39. This latter upturn was due, probably, to the delayed effects of Roosevelt's Keynesian policies of the New Deal finally swinging the big ship around, although some lay greater emphasis on the rearmament orders coming in from Europe as it prepared for WWII.

[Amazing what you can learn from studying sf magazines, hey?]

Then the upsurge continues, as though the bad dream of 1932-37 had been shaken off and the growth of 30-31 resumed. The 'boom' continues, apparently, until late 43-44 when presumably the gearing of the U.S. economy to the war effort finally hit home. It would be interesting to know exactly which of the wartime constraints were most damaging here; I suppose the draft (conscription) can be thought of first, although perhaps there were paper restrictions also. The postwar period you're covering next should be much less amenable to 'explanation' in terms of economic ups and downs, and more directly reflect variations in actual interest in sf themes. I look forward to it. It would be interesting to do a histogram of all this, to show the story at a glance. Has this been done?

[It has now!]

I just received from Graham Stone a copy of the very first sf magazine I saw: the December 1933 *Wonder Stories*. What struck me most about it was the abysmal quality of the writing, which is about as bad as anything I can recall reading in printed form, and light-years below what I can remember of the quality of those sf mags I saw even in the 50s and 60s. I don't know if this indicates that the later boom years attracted competent writers or whether the general standard of 'pulp' fiction had risen anyway. Writers of the standard of Alfred Bester or Piers Anthony or Ursula Le Guin would have been inconceivable in the 30s, to judge from this sample.

Something I've wondered about for years was the appearance in *Wonder Stories* (some time in 34-35) of a story called 'The Final Struggle' by Francesco (Francesca?) Bivona. It had the distinction of being the absolute peak of bad writing, even by the prevailing *Wonder Stories* standard. I assumed that the publisher or someone with financial clout in the Gernsback stable had promised a close relative or friend they could see themselves in print, and the editor (Weisinger?) [no, Charles Hornig] had no option. (He retaliated, as I recall, by giving it no introductory blurb at all, contrary to custom, and by later printing letters from readers blasting it.) Do you happen to know the story about this?

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Marc Ortlieb, Forest Hill, Vic.

3 July, 2001

I didn't think much of the centerfold. I know that there are those who find older magazines stimulating, but I would have preferred a younger magazine without the air-brushed unknown bits.

I liked the article on Foo and Kilroy was here, though was surprised that no one mentioned the Isaac Asimov story "The Message" (*Earth is Room Enough*) about the time traveller visiting World War II who feels obliged to prove that he had been there.

The other use of Foo is in the shaggy dog story about the Foo bird, which has excreta that damages the skin only if the excreta is wiped off, exposing the skin to the air: hence, if the foo shits, wear it. (I think Spider Robinson worked a variant on it into one of the Callaghan's stories with the punchline "As any seal can plainly foo.")

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Rose Mitchell, Sydney, NSW

5 July, 2001

I found the story on the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan sad. I was shocked that people would do such a thing to such important artifacts. And that they had stood through the ages only to be blown up... Even though you provided some interesting background information that explained some of the rationale for such vandalism, it does not excuse such a violent and shortsighted act.

[Now we know it was only a prelude.]

I also found absolutely fascinating the piece on/by Don Tuck. Being the chair of next year's Natcon (Convergence 2002) has seen me delving into fan histories. The 2002 Natcon will celebrate 50 years since the first was held (in Sydney). I could find little or no information about Don other than that he was supposed to be the Guest of Honour at Aussiecon 1 and seemed to have gaffed. So your piece was most welcome and has filled in some holes 'in the fabric of time' for me.

Still puzzling over the chart of pulps but no doubt will get it eventually.

[A virulent strain of fandom produces *pulp fever*, but some hardy souls are immune.]

Bert Castellari, Curtin, ACT

9 July, 2001

"Foo" was common wartime graffiti in Australia though hardly memorable. Chad too. I can't add more than that because I was out of the country a great deal of the time. Frederick Ludowyk, editor of *Ozwords*, at the Australian National Dictionary Centre at the ANU, may be of help to anybody wanting to follow up on local usage. My 1977 edition of Sid Baker's *The Australian Language* attributes it to the R.A.N. and says it is a mischief-making and legendary person to whom all lapses and bungling were attributed. No doubt some wartime feature writers would have done specials on foo for their newspapers. It should be possible to check whether the *Sydney Morning Herald* had anything on foo, although it was a stuffy old paper at the time. A few months ago I talked to a librarian at the National Library of Australia who told me they had a set of the *SMH* index volumes which were published until 1947. There is also a set in the public library in Sydney.

A. Langley Searles, Bronxville, N.Y.

11 July, 2001

It was very nice of you to follow Graham Stone's suggestion and send me a copy of *Mumblings from Munchkinland* #17. He probably thought I'd be interested to see the supplementary insert of the s-f magazine timeline -- which I was. It is a valuable research tool, summarizing, as it does, so much information in such a small space. I look forward to your continuing it beyond 1944. In this format you can spot trends that wouldn't be apparent from data-listings of the individual magazines, for example the sudden influx of new titles in the field just before the war, and the nadir of publications in 1933. Why didn't you include *Weird Tales*? I might add that in addition to the sources you give I should recommend Mike Ashley's *Science Fiction, Fantasy and Weird Fiction Magazines* (1985), which is detailed and comprehensive.

[*Weird Tales*, and its companion(s) *Magic Carpet* and *Oriental Stories*, were included on the first draft and I regret removing them -- *WT*, in particular, because it was such an important title and because of its numerous reincarnations over the years. However, I had to draw the line somewhere, if only to save my sanity. (Now *there's* a straight line for you.) I've heard of the Ashley book and would love to have a copy but don't yet and couldn't find one to consult.]

Ron Clarke, Sydney, NSW

25 July, 2001

I had heard on the news of the destruction of the Buddha statues, but had not realised how they had been constructed. I thought that they had been carved out of the rock, like some of the Egyptian statues. Yes, it is certainly a cultural loss - another tick to add to the sins of organised religion.

There were certainly a lot more pieces of acknowledged fiction published in the newspapers in times gone past. That piece, Phew! by Alan P. Roberts is the type of writing that would have been published in a fanzine in any age. I don't see much by Foo these days - the illos on fences, etc seem to have died out in the 1970s.

I can sympathise with Don Tuck and his comments about recent AussieCon speeches, as I was also mentioned in probably the same one -- my copy is buried around here somewhere.

The timeline of US prozines was interesting - I have some few pre-40s prozines, but haven't had the collecting mood (frenzy?) for other issues. I started reading and collecting the prozines in 1961, but in 1993 I sold all but a few issues of *F&SF* because of storage problems in moving house.

I wonder what a Russian would think of the Bolshoy article? Everyone has their own thing, I suppose -- there are people who like travelling around Europe looking at old churches, I believe. And graveyards.

[Yes, I stumbled upon the website of a group that records the details on gravestones recently -- oddly enough, my search was for library associations.]

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Erika Maria Lacey, Qld.

6 August, 2001

It's very upsetting to hear that the Buddhas were destroyed. That people would do such a thing is inconceivable to me. Did you get to see them when you were in Afghanistan? I hope so; now that they are gone, the only way that folks will be able to partake of them is through photographs and video recordings. I always knew that religious fervour could be dangerous ... or was it political manoeuvring? I'm afraid that my knowledge of what goes on in the world is limited to what I hear on the telly when my parents are watching the news.

I'd always wondered about "Foo" and "foo". The American band with the name "Foo Fighters" baffled me; then again, a lot of band names are on the odd side, so I didn't spend much time thinking about it. The only people I know who really use it still are the IT people I used to associate with last year; they were always on about foo this, foo that, though it was more of a "blah" thing, a word that they'd use to fill in for nothing, and I'm sure that none of them knew the historical background of it.

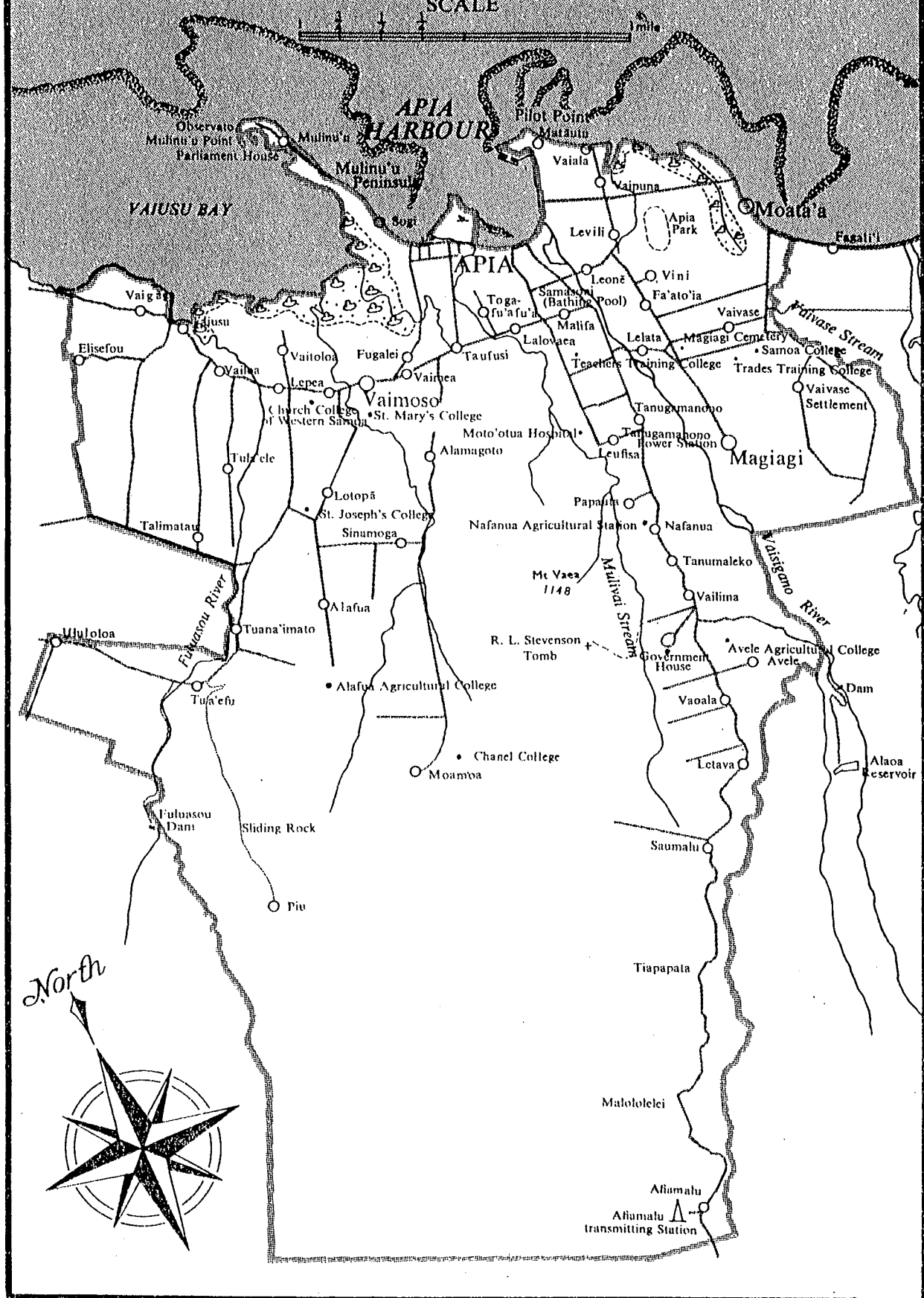
The work involved in tracking down Alan Robert's story must have been rather considerable. Graham Stone lives in Perth, right? [No, that's Grant; Graham is in Sydney.] So he wouldn't even have access to the National Library and the archives of stuff there. The story reminds me a lot of various fiction I've read from the 40s and 50s. The characters have the same feel. Or maybe it's the situation. Kind of an Enid Blyton thing [!], or even Archie Mercer's *The Meadows of Fantasy*, which I've read of late.

That timeline must have taken quite a bit of time to put together. I'm rather astounded that you did it, but am glad; I'd not known of some of these magazines, and find the skew interesting. That *Amazing* and *Astounding* went for so long ... I knew that they were both long-lived, but I'd not really conceived of it in comparison with other magazines of their time.

Pia must have wrecked that jumper of hers. Let's hope that it was a cheap one ... and a very ingenious idea it was, too. Most places have a dress code, especially theatres. Clubs are supposed to as well, although I've gotten in with the raggiest of clothes where male friends are turned aside because they don't look spiffy enough. Watching operas and the like on television ... you don't watch them to understand (although they're subtitled) but for the performance. Fight scenes are translatable into any language, I guess; that may account for the intense like of Asian kickboxing films my brother has. He definitely hates any other sort of foreign film with a passion.

APIA AND ENVIRONMENTS

SCALE



[*Elfie*, continued from p.6]

Tim and I went to the US, ostensibly to help her pack, and in fact added to her shipment when I found and bought a run of digest *Astoundings*. Gran thought it was hilarious when, bringing them into her house during a heavy rainshower, I used an umbrella to cover the magazines instead of me. Later she helped me acquire many other magazines which appear on the timeline in this issue. Harking back to an earlier age, she always referred to the mags and comics alike as “joke-books”.

In Perth my folks were fortunate in being able to acquire the house next door for her and here it became a habit to play cards on Saturday nights after dinner. Initially she was still able to cook her incredibly tender roasts, and prepare her exotic jello dishes, but as the cumulative effects of age and past car accidents took their toll, she cooked less. She made the trip across to Melbourne in 1993 to be at our wedding, but she was uncomfortable on the long flights. We saw her less frequently after we moved to Tasmania, but kept in touch via the phone.

The amount of care she required eventually meant that she had to move into a home, and it was from here that she was taken to hospital. Although her condition did not initially seem life-threatening, she passed away there after a short stay. In accordance with her wishes, my parents took her back to Chicago, where she was buried beside her beloved Vern.

Farewell, Elfie, Rest in Peace

[*Samoa*, continued from p.5]

Just as the Samoan economy was recovering from the effects of the twin cyclones, it suffered an even worse blow when a leaf blight wiped out the nation’s staple crop and chief source of export revenue, taro. The economy has even now not fully recovered and a chief line of research at the USP School of Agriculture seeks to identify blight-resistant strains of taro. In the meantime, Samoa has become highly dependent upon foreign aid – about which, more next issue.

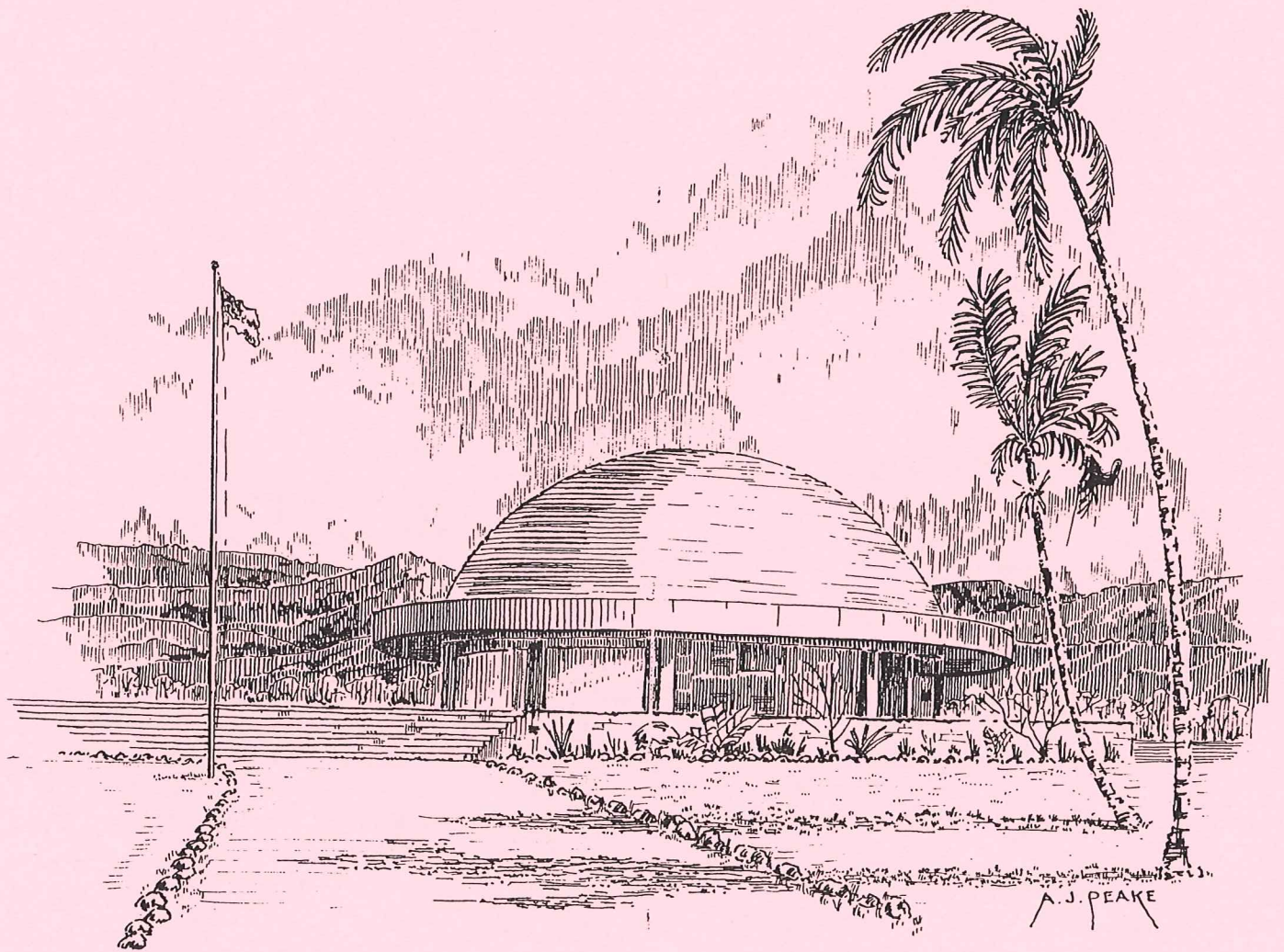
Well, we’re not quite out of this world, but somehow that title seemed appropriate for this issue’s cover. Don Wollheim edited the short-lived *Out of This World Adventures* for Avon Publications, but it lasted only two issues in 1950. Wollheim was able to enlist some big-name authors, but acquired none of their big stories. A full-colour comic supplement in the middle failed to attract new readers.

The giant wasp appears regularly on the cover of *Integrated Pest Management Reviews* (Kluwer Academic). The rest of the cover images are by Alapati Avealalo, taken from *Clipart for Agriculture in the South Pacific* (1989) published by IRETA, USP’s agricultural research institute. (How many fans are supplied with material for their zines by their employer?!) The map on page 4 comes courtesy of *The Contemporary Pacific : a Journal of Island Affairs* (University of Hawai’i Press).

On the back cover: No the aliens have not landed in Samoa. This building is in fact the national Parliament House, or *fale fonu*. You can find it on the map opposite, on the peninsula at upper left. Our house is in Moamoa (centre), not far from what was then called the Alafua Agricultural College. Both map and illustration, originated in *Samoa Sketchbook* (1979) by A.J. Peake and Nelson Eustis.

Merry Christmas, everyone, and we hope you enjoy a Happy and Prosperous New Year! Letters of comment are welcome, to:

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Timeline of American Science Fiction Magazines,

1945 - 1964

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