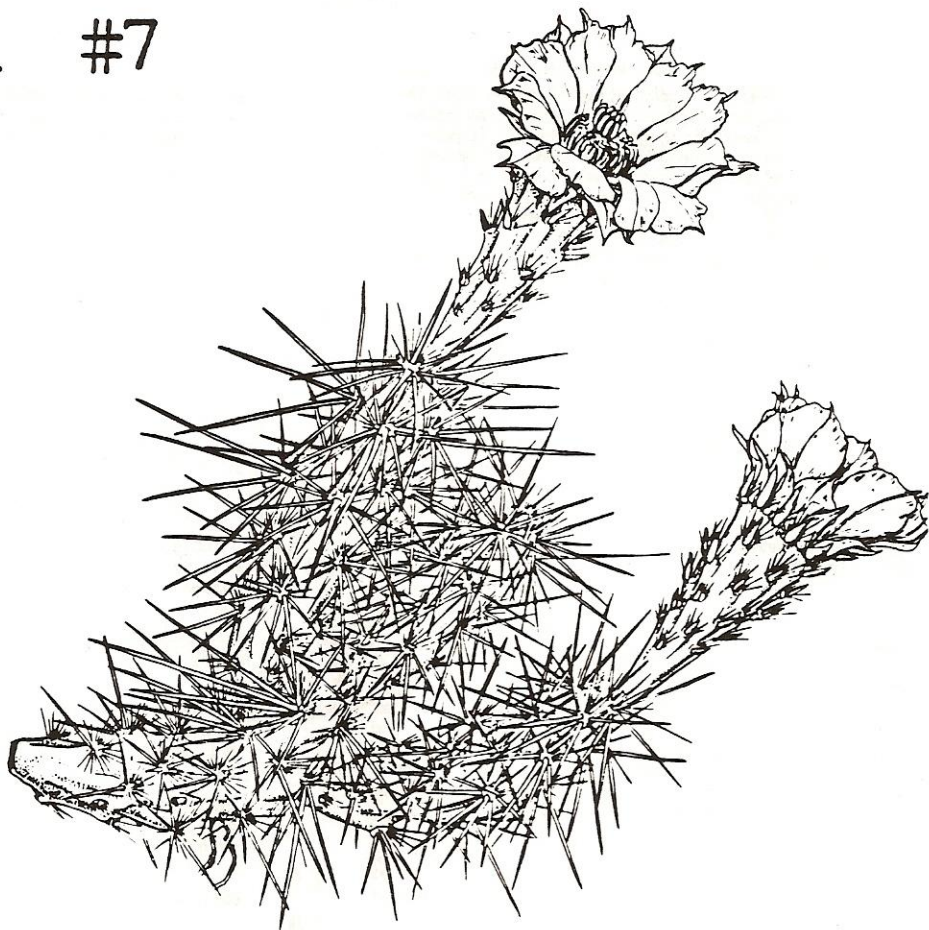


OPUNTIA #7



ISSN 1183-2703

OPUNTIA is published irregularly by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. It can be had for \$1 per copy, letter of comment, or in trade for your zine. Some back issues still available; write first.

ART CREDITS: The front cover depicts Opuntia stanleyi var. parishii, drawn by Lucretia Breazeale Hamilton for the 1968 book "The Native Cacti of California". The page 5 stylized maple leaf is clip art from the November 1991 riding report put out by Harvie André, member for the Calgary Centre riding. Our tax dollars in action. I don't actually live in that riding; it's where my post office box number is, and so I get all the junk mail intended for downtown businesses. Page 6 is drawn by Jeanne Russell Janish and comes from "Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest" (1961). The clip art on page 11 came out of the October 1, 1991, issue of "The New Era", the weekly newspaper of Melita, Manitoba. I must look it up in the atlas someday and find out where it is. On page 13 is a 1716 illustration of O. curassavica done by Richard Bradley in his book "Historia Plantarum Succulentarum". And finally, we have O. fragilis by unknown artist from the 1913 book "Illustrated Flora of the Northern U.S., Canada, and British possessions".

EDITORIAL: Trouble and strife in this ish, nothing but strikes, lockouts, and industrial sabotage. But you can read it for yourself, so I'll say no more on that.

Record-breaking temperatures here in Calgary. The last week of February has seen daily highs of 22°C, which is room temperature. Everybody is outside in shirtsleeves

instead of heavy parkas. 'Tis the winter of our content, although the farmers will be hurting from the dry soil.

I recently received Progress Report #1 from Conadian, ie., Winnipeg in '94. As of January 1, 1992, they report a total of 2310 members, of whom 2024 are from the USA, 224 from Canada, and the rest from elsewhere on this planet. If I understand their flowchart correctly, a supporting membership is US\$25 or CAN\$30, and attending membership is US\$75 or CAN\$85. There is a reduced rate for children twelve and under. The address of Conadian is Box 2430, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4A7. I have my attending membership and hope to be there.

One of the authors in this ish is Crad Kilodney, the bête noire of the Canadian literary establishment. He earns his living selling his books on the streets of downtown Toronto. "Blood-sucking Monkeys From North Tonawanda" is sold out, but you can still pick up a copy of "Excrement", "Putrid Scum", or "Junior Brain Tumors in Action". He also carries a concealed tape recorder on him while working and has compiled three cassettes of "On The Street With Crad Kilodney". If any of this sounds interesting, send him an SASE for his current pricelist. I'll be reviewing his tapes in a future ish. Write to Kilodney at Box 54541, 1712 Avenue Road, North York, Ontario, M5M 4N5. Another future ish will be devoted to zine reviews. I feel guilty for never mentioning any of the zines I trade with, while they review OPUNTIA frequently. At the back of this ish is a listing of what I currently trade for; greater detail in a couple of months. The next ish of OPUNTIA will be #7.1, a review of some of the stuff I've read recently. Not too many bestsellers though, as much of my current reading has copy-right dates like 1947 or 1980. Issues of OPUNTIA devoted to reviews will be fractionally numbered as [].1, just to keep bibliographers straight.

ART STRIKE MANIFESTO

[from Yawn #1, 1989-9-15, slightly edited]

We call for all artists to put down their tools and cease to make, distribute, sell, exhibit, or discuss their work from January 1, 1990, to January 1, 1993. We call for all galleries, museums, agencies, alternative spaces, periodicals, theatres, art schools, etc., to cease all operations for the same period.

Art is conceptually defined by a self-perpetuating elite and is marketed as an international commodity; the activity of its production has been mystified and co-opted; its practitioners have become manipulable and/or marginalized through self-identification with the term "artist" and all it implies.

To call one person an artist is to deny another an equal gift of vision; thus the myth of the "genius" becomes an ideological justification for inequality, repression, and famine. What an artist considers to be his or her identity is a schooled set of attitudes; preconceptions which imprison humanity in history. It is the roles derived from these identities, as much as the art products mined from this reification, which we must reject.

Imagine a world in which art is forbidden! Art galleries would close. Books would vanish. Pop stars would shed their glamour overnight. Advertising would cease, television would die. We could refocus our vision not on a



succession of false images but on the world as it is. A stillness would fill the air. Art has provided us with fantasy worlds, escapes from reality. For whatever else it is, art is not reality. Soap operas, novels, movies, concerts, the theatre, poetry. None of these are real as a starving child is real, as a town without water is real. Art is the glamorous escape, the transformation that shields us from the world we live in. Injustice, endemic disease, famine, war. These are real. Art has replaced religion as the opiate of the people just as the artist has replaced the priest as the spokesman of the spirit. We turn away from mountains of food that rot in storage while across the globe men grow too weak to eat, because it is time for our favourite TV program. Artists are murderers just as surely as the soldier who sights down the barrel of a gun to shoot an unarmed civilian. Without art, life would be unendurable! We would have to transform this world. Forbid art and revolution would follow: the withholding of creative action is the only weapon left to us. Seeing and creating are the same activity. Those who create art are also creating the starving. In a world in which art is forbidden, the deserts would flower. Give up art. Save the starving.

[For sample copies of YAWN, a single-sheet Art Strike newsletter, and the associated zine Retrofuturism, a US\$10 banknote would not go amiss at Retrofuturism, Box 227, Iowa City, Iowa 52244.]

WHAT WE NEED IS AN ART LOCKOUT

by Leanteri Polvikoski

The idea of an Art Strike to protest the current condition of the arts is one that has captured the fancy of many people. I think it is a good idea but is aimed at the wrong people, using the wrong method. The artists participating in the Art Strike are generally not those who are causing the problems. In most such cases, they are fringe artists known only to a small group, or, putting it more crudely, Wannabes and Neverwillbes. Those who have made art into Art, who live in and for the galleries, who judge art by reputation of the artist rather than merit of the work, those are the ones who should be silenced. Those who believe that the standards of Art are set only in New York, London, or Paris are the ones we can do without for a few years.

[Toronto likes to flatter itself as being the centre of Canadian Art, when in fact it is an imitation of whatever was fashionable in New York last year. Out west here, there is a lightbulb joke circulating as follows. Q. How many Torontonians does it take to change a light bulb? A. Two, one to change the bulb, and the other to stay on the telephone and relay instructions from New York.]

The Art Strike now underway is not much of a trauma to people who reach for their wallets whenever they hear the word 'Art'. Indeed, it is doubtful that many trendoids have even heard of it, nor the editors of glossy art magazines aimed at yuppies and Sunday shoppers. Those who produce Art and justify it with pretentious and very opaque manifestos continue as before. Academics churn out unreadable articles for obscure journals on the subject of Art, although to be fair to them, many are trapped on the publish-or-perish treadmill. Like a labour union local that refuses to admit to economic reality, the only method of dealing with the situation is the lockout. Force them to realize what life is like out there.

How to go about initiating an Art Lockout? The first thing to do is cut off all the subsidies. Government agencies everywhere would quickly go for this; it is an easy way to reduce the deficit, and it would be popular with the electorate, who are tired of paying taxes only to see the money go to a bunch of layabout artists who make dresses out of steaks, or pay megabucks for 'Fire', a painting of stripes that any competent journeyman painter could duplicate with roller brushes at far less cost. Canada Council could be gutted without much trouble; the hollering from artists would be deafening, but in the final analysis, the silent majority of voters outnumber the Art community at the polls. University and college grants would go down the drain for all those artists-in-residence. Any academic writing for publication would have to prove competence in the English language; no more turgid articles in pseudo-Marxist jargon.

I can't think of any practical method of shutting the art galleries without getting mixed up in issues of censorship and who will guard the guardians. Perhaps loccers might have a few ideas on how to let any art in circulation do so without a claue to justify it by the reputation of the artist or fashionable critical theory. Let the yuppies panic at the loss of expensive Art, the kind that fits in with the BMW and the heavily-mortgaged house in the better part of the city. Let them buy velvet paintings of Elvis.

Since OPUNTIA is nominally an SF zine, I should perhaps throw in something about SF art. The crowd that buys at convention auctions is very seldom part of the BMW set. Reputation is not as important here, as few SF artists are well known. The market for unicorns, Spock, and loinclothed barbarians is exceeded only by the market for velvet Elvises. I expect that eventually velvet paintings will become accepted by academia, first as pop culture, then as fossilized material worthy of learned articles. SF art will end up the same way. We can expect to be afflicted

(continued next page)

with articles such as "Kelly Freas and his females: A look at Analog covers during the Campbellian period." or "The significance of spaceships as phallic symbols: Amazing covers during the Gernsback era.".

I don't know that I would lockout any SF artists, mainly because most SF art has an apparent theme, and requires more than just splattering the canvas with paint thrown on at random. Artists who display in galleries service a market of private collectors and museums who can be snowed by doubletalk and fashion. SF artists, however, make their money by selling to magazine editors, book publishers, and through SF cons. In this case, the consumer of the art expects something understandable without reference to a manifesto. There is a natural feedback mechanism that prevents SF art from swerving off into realms where reputation comes first and value last.

POETIC TERRORISM

by Hakim Bey

[from Yawn #29, 1991-6-5, somewhat edited]

The audience reaction or aesthetic shock produced by Poetic Terrorism (PT) ought to be at least as strong as the emotion of terror, powerful disgust, sexual arousal, superstitious awe, sudden intuitive breakthrough, dadaesque angst, no matter whether the PT is aimed at one person or many, no matter whether it is signed or anonymous. If it does not change someone's life, it fails.

Don't do PT for other artists, do it for people who will not realize, at least for a few moments, that what you have done is art. Avoid recognizable art categories, avoid politics, don't stick around to argue, don't be sentimental. Be ruthless, take risks, vandalize only what must be defaced, do something children will remember all their lives, but don't be spontaneous unless the

PT muse has possessed you.

Dress up. Leave a false name. Be legendary. The best PT is against the law but don't get caught. Weird dancing in all-night computer banking lobbies. Unauthorized pyrotechnic displays. Land-art, bizarre alien artifacts strewn in parks. Burglarize houses but instead of stealing, leave Poetic-terrorist objects. Pick someone at random and convince them they are the heir to an enormous, useless, and amazing fortune, say 5000 square miles of Antarctica, or an aging circus elephant, or an orphanage in Bombay, or a collection of alchemical manuscripts. Later they will come to realize that for a few moments they believed in something extraordinary, and will perhaps be driven as a result to seek out some more intense mode of existence.



ART SABOTAGE

by Dale Speirs

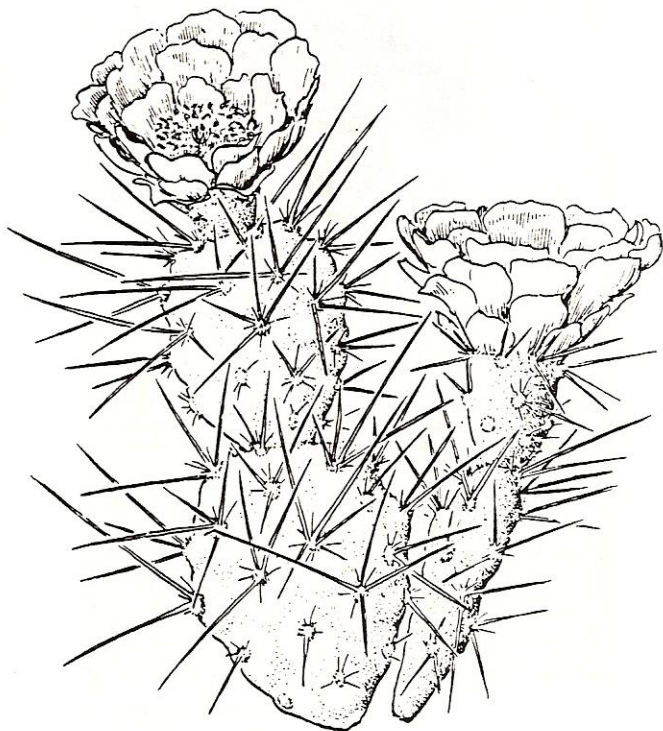
The next three items deal with hoaxes and how to confuse theatre goers. All part of what I classify as Art Sabotage.

Hoaxing editors with manuscripts by famous authors is a tradition that goes back many years. The idea here is not to demonstrate that the editor is incompetent due to failure to recognize a story by a famous author. It is impossible for anyone to remember or even know all the stories that have been published. Supposedly, however, a good story will be recognized as being good no matter what name it was submitted under. In actual fact, many editors are more lenient towards big names and will take a story from them that they would have rejected had it been submitted by Col. (ret.) Herman Mlunga Mbongo, late of the Ugandan Armed Forces. Ideally, stories should be scrutinized in contest format, with the author's name removed from the manuscript so as to avoid bias. Hoaxers are not plagiarists, who expect to profit from theft of intellectual property. Hoaxers simply want to point out that the emperor has no clothes.

Not all rejections are due to the failure of an editor to recognize a good story. Sometimes the material is inappropriate for the magazine; an Interzone story won't have much chance at Analog. The editor could have a backlog of material, resulting in rejection, or, conversely, be short for the next issue and forced to buy a poor story just to fill a hole. These things happen.

But go to a classical concert and watch the audience. It doesn't matter the quality of the performance, the orchestra gets a round of applause. An opera singer can step all over his lines, and he'll still get somebody hollering "Bravo!, Bravo!". R. Murray Schafer sets out to trap these trained seals with a composition that fouts up those conditioned to applaud if the orchestra

is silent for more than fifteen seconds. The Beatles did the same thing with a few of their songs, putting in false endings.



Book publishers like to posture themselves as a bulwark against cultural invasions.

Yet this cultural veneer is as sound as a dime because book publishing has been and will be a business first.

Case in point is a recent test perpetrated a Florida reporter. For the test he selected Majorie Kinnan Rawling's novel, *The Yearling*, the 1938 Pulitzer Prize winner, and subsequently a Hollywood film classic. Under the new title, *A Cracker Comes Of Age*, he shipped it off to 22 U.S. publishers.

The result was 13 rejection slips saying it was unworthy of public consideration, which says something about the decline of literary standards, and eight non-responses.

Only one publisher recognized the hoax for what it was.

Embarassing was that publisher Charles Scribner's Sons, whose corporate antecedent published the *Yearling*, rejected "*Cracker*." Defence offered by most publishers was they pay little attention to unsolicited books that don't arrive via the literary agent.

That is one reason why we have pulp masquerading as best sellers, along with seasonal crops of cook books, dust collecting coffee table books, commissioning of instant topicality, and wringing out of proven writers at least one new book a year whether they merit it or not.

Vern Simaluk, from his column "On The Street" in the Calgary Herald, 1991-8-19, page C2

THE BROKEN THREAD: ARIADNE IN THE WORKS OF R. MURRAY SCHAFER
by Paul Dutton

[I found the extract below to be an excellent example of Art Sabotage. The essay from which it comes originally appeared in the Spring 1989 issue of DESCANT.]

"No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes", whose title he took from his contract for its commission from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 1970. The piece starts during the orchestra's tuning-up, continues in structured form through the arrival of the conductor and his eventual departure at the peak of a thunderous crescendo, then tapers off with a gradual diminution of sound - except that the score, which specifies that the composition must not conclude any portion of a program, calls for a quartet of string players to hold, just audibly, the opening chord of the next piece on the program until the stage is re-ordered and the next piece begun, with a further instruction to the orchestra to greet any audience applause with another crescendo, similar in duration and intensity to the applause, and then to fade out again, repeating the process until all applause ceases (he could have subtitled the piece "Catch-22").

"No Longer Than Ten (10) Minutes" has as its clear purpose the undermining of the conventions of the symphony orchestra (prior to its premiere, conductor Victor Feldbrill kept asking Schafer to quit the tease and tell him where he was to take his bow) and cleverly elbows its way into the sanctified space reserved for whatever romantic chestnut is to follow it on the program. It constitutes a virtual act of sabotage against an institution that Schafer (with others) believes to have abdicated its responsibility by perpetuating the dead tradition of romantic music, at the cost of newer styles. Could the recent accelerating demises of symphony orchestras in Canada and the States be seen as bearing out that view?

[I like to refer to opera, orchestral music, and jazz as the fossil arts. Ted White agreed to the first two but took offense at his beloved jazz being considered a fossil art.]

CONFESSIONS OF A LITERARY HOAXER

by Crad Kilodney

Art is warfare. And since there are far more enemies out there than can ever be dealt with, the artist will never run out of targets. In the arsenal of the artist, the most rarely used but potentially effective weapon is the hoax. It is the nuke against which there is no defence. Its virtues are creativity, wit, publicity, and the satisfaction of every artist's lust for revenge. Its main drawback is the difficulty of pulling it off in the first place. As I learned from my own experience, a good hoax requires a lot of time and detailed planning.

I'm a short story writer and haven't had a salaried job since 1978. Instead, I've been publishing my own little books and selling them on the streets of Toronto -- profitably, if not lucratively. So it isn't just egotism that leads me to believe I know how to write a story.

CBC Radio has an annual literary competition, and one of the categories is the short story. On three occasions I sent one in. Each time I got screened out in the preliminary reading by an anonymous reader who decided my work was not even good enough to pass along to the official judges. After the third rejection, I decided to get some revenge. To do this, I laid out a plan and followed it methodically.

The first step was to find ten stories by famous authors who had to be American or European, dead, and not particularly trendy at the present time. The stories had to fall within a specified length. And most important, each story had to have something about it that would trigger a negative response in the mind of the preliminary reader, who, predictably, expected to read more bad stories than good ones, and who would therefore screen out the majority of manuscripts that landed on his desk.

Next I had to line up eight collaborators who would type

the stories on their own typewriters and mail them in from their own addresses. I had two mailing addresses, so I could do two stories myself. Each story would be a verbatim copy of the original; only the title would be changed. Starting with a pool of ten stories was necessary because I figured a few people would screw up, and I wanted at least a half-dozen rejections to make the hoax credible. This proved a wise precaution because three people did screw up. But the other seven stories did, indeed, get screened out.

The authors of the rejected stories were O. Henry, Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Jack London, Franz Kafka, Maxim Gorky, and Luigi Pirandello. The three authors whose stories were lost or spoiled were Thomas Mann, Stephen Crane, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The typescripts all conformed to the contest rules, but they were deliberately made to look somewhat amateurish, with poor-quality paper, faint ribbons, small margins, and occasional errors corrected in ink. The new titles had to be bad without being inappropriate. Each submission was to go with a cover letter that struck an amateurish tone.

I handled the Faulkner and Kafka entries myself. The Faulkner story was an obscure work "Nympholepsy" which was written in just the sort of turgid style that would try the patience of any editor with a tall stack of manuscripts to get through. I retitled it "Desire Under The Moon". In my naive cover letter, I wrote that this was "my best story so far". The Kafka story was a brilliant satire called "A Little Woman". Seen in the light of the 1980s, it would be misconstrued as an anti-feminist story. So I helped it a little by retitling it "My Enemy -- The Little Woman". I also typed it on yellow paper.

[continued next page]

O. Henry was arguably the best story writer in all of American literature, so I knew that duping the preliminary readers on this one would be difficult. I settled on one of his western stories, "The Reformation of Calliope", because westerns are considered low genre by snobbish literary editors. I also helped this one by retitling it "The Gun-Toting Terror of Quicksand" and concocting a cover letter that came across much too enthusiastic. ("This is the rootin', tootin', shootin'est story you ever read!")

Another low genre is the adventure story, so I had no doubt that Jack London's "A Daughter of the Aurora", one of his Canadian adventure stories, would be snuffed out quickly by the preliminary reader. I instructed my collaborator to put the manuscript under a sofa cushion and sit on it for a few days to give it the appearance of a much-travelled and much-rejected manuscript. We retitled this one "Wolf Fang --- Dog of the Frozen North".

"The Other Woman", by Sherwood Anderson, was about a poet who has just won a literary prize and has suddenly become famous. Editors don't like stories by writers who write about people like themselves becoming famous; they take it for egotism. They also don't like to see the words "The End" at the end of a story. This is like going for a job interview wearing white socks.

Getting a Russian author for my pool of classic authors presented a great difficulty because I was afraid the Russian place names and characters' names would arouse suspicion. My first choice had been Chekhov, but I couldn't find anything of his that I thought I could get away with. I wanted a Russian very badly, however, so I went through the works of Gorky and found a vignette from a work called "Tales of Italy". It was a piece of classic kitsch about a mother who confronts the conqueror Tamerlane in behalf of all mothers of slain soldiers. I figured the unusual historical setting and Gorky's bombastic style would put the preliminary reader right off.

Without question, the best story of the lot was Pirandello's "The Man With the Flower In His Mouth". Pirandello was a Nobel Prize winner and this was probably the best story he ever wrote. However, it starts off in such an ordinary way that the preliminary reader would probably not go past page one. Editors flatter themselves that they can size up a manuscript on the first page. Under the fake name Philip Wentworth, even a Nobel Prize winner wouldn't get a proper reading.

When all the rejected manuscripts came back, I collected them, complete with postmarked envelopes and rejection slips, and bided my time until just before the contest winners were announced. Then I prepared a press release and delivered the evidence in person to the Canadian Press wire service. The story hit the papers coast to coast the next day, January 6, 1989. My phone rang off the hook. I gave at least nine interviews, six of which, ironically enough, were to the CBC itself.

Robert Weaver, director of the literary contest, was hugely embarrassed, and offered the excuse that perhaps the stories weren't that good after all. Weaver was personally responsible for the O. Henry rejection, no mean feat for someone who edits anthologies. The only group that stuck up for him was the Writers Union of Canada, which reported on the hoax in its monthly newsletter without mentioning my name. I thought Weaver's cop-out was pretty shabby since the authors in question were all dead and couldn't defend themselves. Would anyone dare say such a thing about a great author who was still alive?

Irving Layton was very much alive, and I decided to use his poetry as the basis of my second hoax. This one would be directed against Canadian publishers. I would compile a manuscript of poems by Layton and circulate it to two dozen or so publishers as an un-

solicited manuscript and see what would happen. My guess was that the publishers would be just the same as CBC's experts. I wasn't wrong.

My first step was to compile the manuscript. I spent several evenings in the Metro Reference Library poring over the published volumes of Layton's poetry, specifically those published by McClelland & Stewart, Layton's principal publisher. I only looked at his older work, nothing later than 1969, to minimize the possibility of it being recognized. Layton has a reputation for being blunt and provocative, so I was on the lookout for poems which might offend the sensibilities of politically-correct editors, as well as poems which were in some way weird or out of keeping with the mindset of 1989. I carefully copied about 85 poems, following the spacing and punctuation precisely. I then retyped them, changing the titles so as to highlight the most negative feature of each poem but still keeping them reasonably appropriate. Then I decided on the order of the poems. The most offensive were at the beginning and end; the "best" were buried in the middle.

Now I had to invent an author, a personality who would complement the manuscript in such a way as to make the worst impression. I created an unknown poet named Herman Mlunga Mbongo, an ex-Ugandan Army colonel. His manuscript would be entitled "Strong Meat". I cooked up an excellent cover letter for Col. Mbongo, in which he talked briefly about his background and declared that the time had come to present his talent to the Canadian public. The letter was so worded that when read between the lines, it would give the impression that Mbongo was probably an ex-thug of Idi Amin who had gotten out of Uganda with a suitcase full of money, and had taken refuge in Switzerland before settling in Canada.

The next step was to compile a list of publishers. I ended up with 26, ranging from big commercial houses to small literary houses. McClelland & Stewart was number

one on the list. If I could fool them, I had the makings of a great hoax; if I couldn't, it would not matter how many other rejections I got. Sure enough, M&S rejected Col. Mbongo with a form rejection slip, signed by Sam Solecki, M&S poetry editor and University of Toronto academic. I was off to a flying start and immediately went after the other 25 publishers. To save time, as well as wear and tear on the manuscript, I typed five identical copies and had them circulating simultaneously. Most came back pretty fast, some even by return mail. By the end of February 1990, I had gotten 25 submissions back and decided not to wait for #26, which was in the hands of a small publisher who had had it for several months and had ignored several followup letters.

As before, I prepared a press release and gave the story to Canadian Press. It broke on March 1st. Irving Layton, disguised as Col. Mbongo, had been rejected by 13 publishers, including M&S, Oxford University Press, Prentice-Hall Canada, Stoddart, Collier Macmillan, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, and several small but respectable literary houses. Another nine publishers returned the manuscript unread for various reasons; in most cases, they said they didn't publish poetry. Two publishers, the two smallest of the 26, recognized the poems as the work of Layton. They were amused. One publisher, Mosaic Press of Oakville, Ontario, was Layton's secondary publisher. They wrote back with an enthusiastic letter and invited Col. Mbongo to come out for a visit. I hadn't counted on this, and I had to stall them until the hoax was wrapped up.

Once again, much publicity coast to coast. Then, about three weeks AFTER the newspaper publicity, publisher #26, Ragweed Press of Charlottetown, P.E.I., sent back their copy with nothing more than a routine rejection slip. Evidently they hadn't heard a thing!

FINIS



FROM: Buck Coulson
2677W-500N
Hartford City, Indiana 47348

1992-2-7

Lloyd Penney comments on a name duplication in fandom. There have been a lot of them, but mostly in more common names; 3 Don Thompsons, 2 John Berrys, 2 Bev Clarks, and so on. Durno isn't quite such a common name.

Harry Warner comments on the possible difficulties of future fan historians. I wonder if there will be any future fan historians? Media fans are nothing if not attuned to the moment, rather than history, and so are convention fans.

[I'm sure there'll be media or con fans interested in writing histories, but their problem will be finding the primary source materials. Worldcons and the big movies will be well documented, but it may be difficult to find material on BOONIES-CON or B-movies of the present.]

FROM: Chester Cuthbert
1104 Mulvey Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 1J5

1992-2-8

Fantasy and SF fans are individualists, and only dedi-

cated workers have the enthusiasm and energy to engage in teamwork necessary to achieve the lasting memorials and accomplishments which, like the work of Harry Warner Jr. and Sam Moskowitz, will make available to future generations the information which is essential as a basis upon which to comprehend any contemporary fandom.

Garth mentions Mike Hall's bibliography of Canadian fanzines. This labour of love could never be a commercially successful venture. Nobody could ever accumulate them all. Editions of many were limited to only a few copies, most of which have now vanished. Your precaution in filing yours with the National Library of Canada should indeed be followed by other publishers.

FROM: Joseph Nicholas
5A Frinton Road, Stamford Hill
London N15 6NH, England

1992-2-5

A hasty postcard in response to OPUNTIA 6 ...

'unwaged' doesn't just mean 'unemployed'. It applies to all those without remunerative work, such as pensioners, housewives (and househusbands), and the disabled. As a euphemism, it's been in circulation in this country since the early 1980s; perhaps its appearance in Canada means that you've finally borrowed it from us? 'pre-owned', however, sounds distinctly USanian. It's never been used in the UK, anyway.

[The context I saw 'unwaged' in, at a theatre, required proof of unemployment, such as a UIC card. There is commonly special rates for senior citizens. I was reading in the Calgary Herald a few days ago a demand that mentally-ill people be referred to as 'consumers of mental health services'.]

FROM: Lloyd Penney
412 - 4 Lisa Street
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6

1992-2-15

Fandom keeps making the same mistakes, to no one's great surprise. It keeps making those mistakes because its membership is in constant flux. Few stick around long enough to get a grasp of what to do right, and relay that information to the next group of fans, should that new group choose to listen and take note, and that usually isn't too likely. Who wants to listen to a pseudo-authority figure in activities that are supposed to be fun? Besides, the usual reason for leaving fandom is being POed with something or someone, and that person usually doesn't feel like talking to anyone, anyway. Each group will learn that even the most enjoyable activities need plenty of hard work to make the fun happen. By the time the new group learns this, they'll be old enough to pass that information on to the group after them, and so fandom goes. None of us should be surprised that this happens. If the average interest span was ten to twenty years, then we'd wonder why the mistakes were repeated, but I've seen some figures stating that the average interest span of a casual fan is two years, and that of an actifan, five years. Fandom is a learning experience anyway. Let 'em learn.

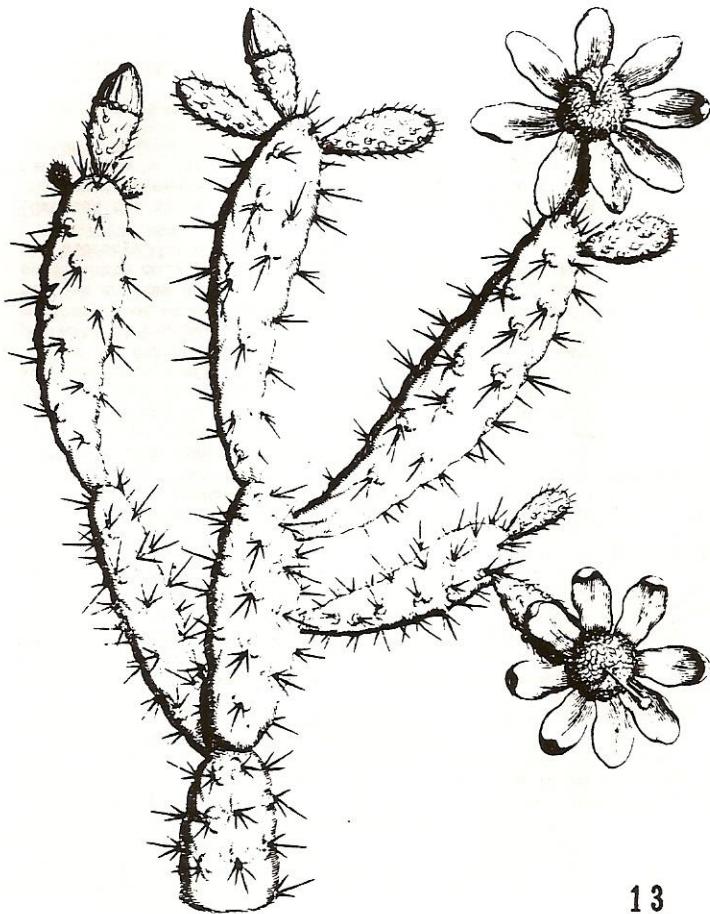
[My researches on the history of the aquarium hobby in Canada show that the vast majority of aquarium clubs do not survive ten years, and most seldom make it past five years. The problem is almost always a failure to make a successful transition from the founders to the next generation.]

Garth Spencer's fanhistory continues to interest me. Michael Skeet, Lorna Toolis, and Albert Frank all live here now, and have maintained minimal participation in local fandom here. I know Michael tried to get involved without success, and has moved on to professional writing. Lorna and Albert moved here to pursue careers in

library work and law respectively. Garth's second last paragraph is a nugget of truth; when people of any interest group get together, there are bound to be differences of opinion, and sometimes, if things don't happen the way people want, the whole group explodes and there is a slump in local fandom as a whole. I like to think that Torfandom is at the beginning of an upswing, with more and more projects coming up on the drawing board. If anyone is interested in keeping some kind of fanhistory here, I'd like to meet them and get some kind of record started.

I've been tracking down fans of past eras for this year's Ad Astra, and have found John Millard, Ned McKeown, Don Hutchison, Boyd Raeburn, Chan Davis, and others. Former New Derelict Al Lastovica now lives in Johannesburg, South Africa, but has made it to a couple of Ad Astras because of cunningly-scheduled business trips (I hope he happens to have another business trip this June). I'd be interested in finding out where Gina and Norm Clarke are living now.

The fanzinish population of Canada is indeed small, but continues to participate, which is about all we can say right now. There's you, myself, Mike Glicksohn, Karl Johanson, Allan Burrows, and a few others who loc, write articles and reviews, and even produce a zine from time to time, while the majority of zine publishers are the clubs: BCSFA, ESFACAS, OSFS, and MonSFA. I think it's a combination of ignorance of fanzines and participation therein, other forms of fanac, the recession, and the usual low level of disposable income. I hope to eventually have enough income to produce my own zine, and I have laid out some plans for it, but nothing will happen unless I can get the cash together.



FROM: Harry Warner Jr.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

1992-2-17

The conclusion of the Edmonton fanhistory (which must have been a terrible time-consumer to piece together and write up) and your introductory remark that "fandom will never collectively learn" had me nodding my palsied old head in agreement. The same factors appear in fan disputes and feuds in all eras of fandom, past and present, and in fandoms all over the world, even those who know too little of English language fans to be subconsciously imitating their brawling behaviour. I suppose nothing can be done, although I can have grandiose visions of some future superfan arising with the compelling personality, the energy, and the resources needed to create a training video for neofans. It would recreate in dramatic manner the consequences of typical fannish problems in the past and show how fans who let themselves repeat the behaviour of their predecessors could wind up writing another Ah, Sweet Idiocy, getting punched in the nose by a fan who flew hundreds of miles to accomplish that blow, or becoming the subject of fanzine disputes that continue a half-century after the episode that started them. Such a video could be shown to every fan entering a con hotel for the first time, publishing a maiden fanzine effort, or making his first appearance at a local fan club meeting, just as the army has films showing inductees what could happen to them if they talk back to the sergeant or accept the invitations of the girls who stand outside doors in the evening hours in the cities.

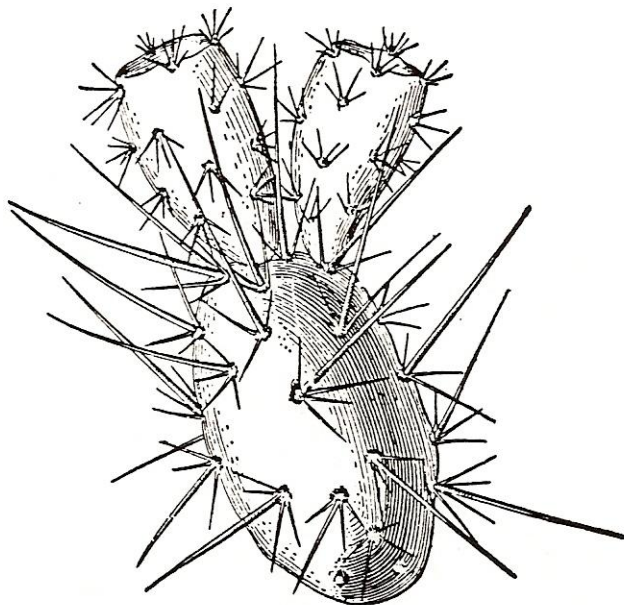
[Although the aquarium hobby has the occasional feud, it is relatively free compared to SF fandom. This may have something to do with the fact that the Canadian Association of Aquarium Clubs and the Federation of American Aquarium Societies both issue booklet series on how to run clubs. Likewise, the philatelic hobby

has a national society in each country to guide the local stamp clubs. These and other, more mature, hobbies are distinguished by the fact that they have better organization at the national and international level, which tends to rub off a bit on local clubs. Failure of local clubs is usually due to reasons other than feuding, such as gaffiation. And national or international organizations do not force clubs to operate in certain ways; they act as a resource and guiding hand, and provide continuity.]

Anyway, Garth deserves all sorts of thanks and commendations for achieving such a difficult fanhistory project. Maybe he or other Canadian fans will do something similar for all the other major Canadian cities, and thus something approaching a comprehensive pan-Canadian fanhistory will be available to anyone who wants to reprint the component parts in one volume.

I'd need an expert opinion from someone in the know before I would consider sending copies of my apazines to the Library of Congress for preservation. That institution in theory saves everything published in this nation, but I've read somewhere that in practice it can't store away everything it receives because of space consumption problems, and it practices a certain amount of discrimination against stuff that seems of no permanent worth. One collecting fan told me horror stories about the disappearance of old pulp magazines that should be there, and mutilation of other issues. The newspapers occasionally publish an item about how members of Congress and their staffs, the only persons authorized to take items from the Library, don't always return them.

[Granted the above, it would still seem to increase the chances of preserving the zines by sending them to a library. Even better if they could be put on microfiche or CD-ROM. Every little bit helps.]



I ALSO HEARD FROM: Harry Andruschak and Henry Welch.

AVAILABLE FOR THE USUAL

Ethel the Aardvark
Box 212, World Trade Centre
Melbourne 3005, Victoria
Australia

FTT
5A Frinton Road
Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH
England

Gegenschein
7 Nicoll Avenue
Ryde, NSW 2112
Australia

Probe
Box 11081
Johannesburg 2000
Republic of South Africa

Thingummybob
c/o Sildan House, Chediston Road
Wissett near Halesworth
Suffolk IP19 ONF
England

BCSFazine
Box 35577
Vancouver, B.C. V6M 4G9

OSFS Statement
Box 6636, Stn J
Ottawa, Ontario K2A 3Y7

Warp
Box 1186, Place du Parc
Montreal, Quebec H2W 2P4

It Goes On The Shelf
713 Paul Street
Newport News, Virginia 23605

Knarly Knews
5538 N. Shasta Drive
Glendale, Wisconsin 53209

Radio Free Thulcandra
11 Lawrence Avenue
Malverne, New York 11565-1406

Stet
17 Kerry Lane
Wheeling, Illinois 60090-6415

Summa Nulla
Box 886
Evansville, Indiana 47706-0886

DR
Box 52028
Durham, North Carolina 27717

FOSFAX
Box 37281
Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281

Mimosa
Box 1350
Germantown, Maryland 20875

Peripheral Visions
926C Waverly Way NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30307-2551

Reluctant Famulus
422 W. Maple Avenue
Adrian, Michigan 49221

Let's Fanac
Box 565
Storrs, CT 06268

Tand
1709 South Holgate
Seattle, Washington 98144

OASFis Event Horizon
Box 616469
Orlando, Florida 32861-6469

Low Orbit
5206 - 20 Avenue NE
Seattle, Washington 98105

Texas SF Inquirer
10316 Flatland Trail
Converse, Texas 78109

Gradient
2 Natalie Drive
Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828

Neophyte
11220 Hooper Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70818

DASFax
153 West Ellsworth Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80223-1623

[ran out of room, but there are
others I trade with.]

FROM: Dale Speirs
Box 6830
Calgary, Alberta
CANADA, T2P 2E7

WHY YOU GOT THIS ZINE

TO:

- ___ Noblesse oblige.
- ___ You contributed (this ish).
- ___ You contributed (next ish).
- ___ We trade.
- ___ We should trade. Interested?
- ___ You sent money. Thanks.
- ___ How about a letter of comment?
- ___ This is the last issue you'll
receive unless you Do Something.