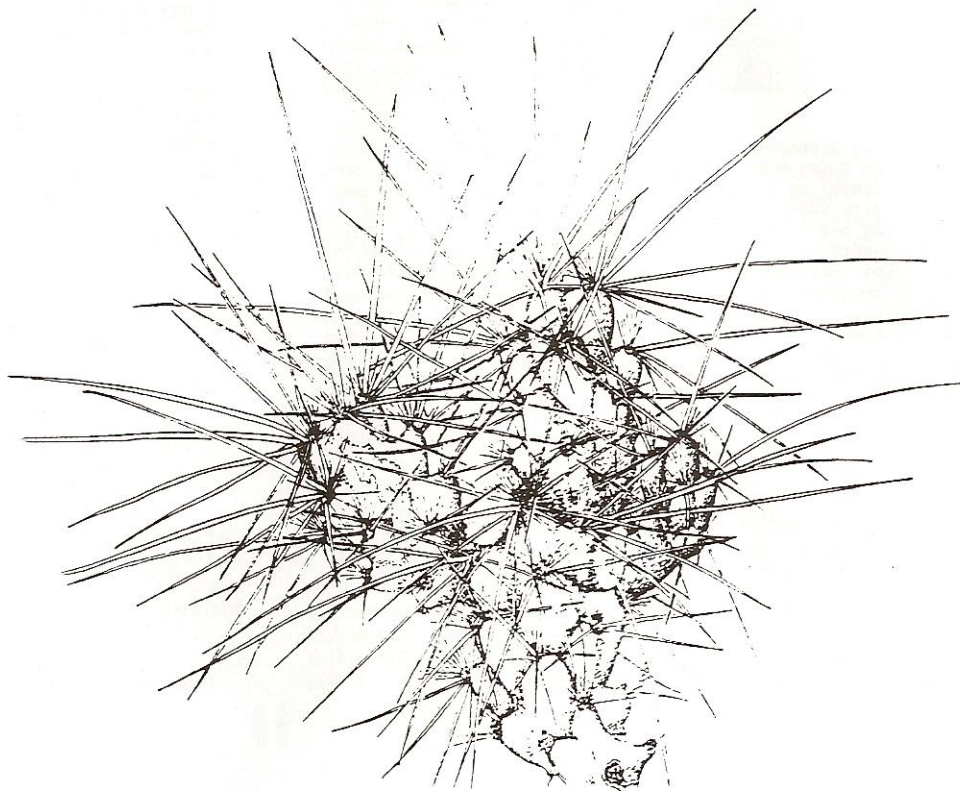


OPUNTIA
12



OPUNTIA #12

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OPUNTIA is published irregularly by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. It is available for \$1 cash, trade for your zine, or letter of comment.

ART CREDIT: The cover depicts Opuntia densispina, drawn by artist Judy Teague. This is a newly-described species from Texas, discovered by B.E. Ralston and R.A. Hilsenbeck. They described it in a paper published in a 1992 issue of MADRONO. Yes, there are still unknown opuntias, even in this age. Lots of coulees have never had botanist set foot in them, and lots of cliffsides, scree, or other broken terrain to discourage prying eyes.

EDITORIAL: The fanhistory in this ish speaks for itself, but I ran out of room for the material on economics. I hope to have more in a future issue, including a review of Karel Capek's famous play R.U.R., which introduced the word 'robot' into the English language. R.U.R. is generally discussed in terms of ethical responsibilities for those who create life, and the more superficial analyses consider it more as an action adventure in which robots overthrow the human race. But the play does make a brief attempt to look at the Economy of Abundance resulting from the use of robots, although it soon veers away into other matters. The robots of R.U.R., by the way, are not mechanical creatures as the word is commonly used today, but are organic creatures, what SFers would call androids.

The Economy of Abundance is one that no one has figured out how to implement. Our machines can feed and clothe us without our having to work, yet we seem further away from it as ever. Why?

ON THE BONNY, BONNY BANKS OF THE FRASER: ADDENDA
by Garth Spencer
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Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 5B1

I note for publication another correction to "Bonny Banks", part 4. It was not material assets, but monetary assets that formed the settlement to UBC AMS and Conference Centre.

CALGARY FANDOM

I don't imagine too many people will rush to book airplane flights to Cowtown (I don't intend to go myself) but the Memorial Park branch of the Calgary Public Library will have a "Science Fiction and Fantasy Lovers Night" on March 16, 19h30 to 21h30. Readings by fantasy authors Tanya Huff and Michelle Sagara, and Star Trek author Margaret Wander Bonanno. Refreshments to follow, along with book sales by Sentry Box and signings. No charge but register in advance. Sponsored by the S.T. Con Science Fiction Society. This event will come just after S.T. Con '93, March 12 to 14 at Ramada Hotel in downtown Calgary, which has the same bunch of authors. \$30 for the con from S.T. Con, 44 Scenic Rd, Calgary, Alberta, T3L 1B9.

ConVersion 10 will be held at the Marlborough Inn from July 16 to 18. GoHs are L. Sprague and Catherine De Camp, Dave Duncan, and Ken Macklin. Toastmaster is Ed Bryant. \$35 until June 30 from ConVersion, Box 1088, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2K9.

REMEMBER THE RED RIVER VALLEY

(Winnipeg fanhistory
1949 - 1984)

by Garth Spencer

(a previous version of this article
appeared in Maple Leaf Rag #11, Jan. 1985)

... Canadian fandom will be found to be segmented in terms of space and time ... Fan activity is group activity, mainly metropolitan, hardly ever provincial, rarely federal ...

As well as being segmented in space, Canadian fandom is segmented in time. Through segmentation in temporal terms, there is little continuity between generations, so that a later generation seldom receives knowledge of a previous generation's activities.

(J.R. Colombo, *Years of Light*)

In 1949, the then-functioning Canadian SF Association established contacts with several Western SF groups, including one in Winnipeg. Shortly afterward, several Eastern SF groups in CSFA dissolved.

In 1950, the Canadian SF Association itself dissolved. Constituent clubs also folded. But about this time Jack Bowie-Reed, then national organizer of the CSFA, was promoting the Winnipeg SF Society, which assumed official existence on February 18, 1951.

Chester Cuthbert writes:

The first few meetings were held at the homes of members and friends, but growing attendance required larger quarters, provided by courtesy of the *Winnipeg Free Press* in a board room, and of Radio Station CKRC in a studio. Minutes of meetings were kept by the Secretary, and formal talks were scheduled; but it was soon clear that formality was unpopular. Attendance dropped quickly ...

The Winnipeg SF Society took on the formidable task of reviving the CSFA, and managed to carry through several CSFA projects. Chester Cuthbert, as President, sorted out the CSFA with other WSFS executives. A survey was made of which members remained and what the organization had come to; the CSFA newsletter was revived; a short history and a fantasy classification system were put into gear.

Only Alastair Cameron's 52-page Fantasy Classification System was still in progress in the spring of 1951, and that was nearly complete. Such systems for categorizing the contents of fantasy stories were not unusual in the 1950s, but Cameron's was more extensive and less subjective than usual, until Darko Suvin's work in the 1970s. (John Robert Colombo further informs us that Dr. Cameron since became professor of astronomy at Harvard.)

Jack Bowie-Reed's *History Of the Canadian SF Association* says a great deal of reorganization in the CSFA was accomplished in 1951. Among other projects, WSFS restarted the circulating library project, collecting several thousand books in 1951 and 1952. This is part of the reason why Chester Cuthbert's house is now engulfed by

Canada's largest SF collection. In fall of 1952 a Canadian fan directory, listing some 500 - 1000 fans, was almost published.

Chester Cuthbert writes again:

... It was discovered, when we sent copies to key cities that changes of address or disappearance of people listed in the Directory (meant) that it would be a disservice to fans to distribute such an obsolete list; our funds were exhausted by publication of the Cameron work, and a projected newsletter ... was never published either; so the CSFA collapsed ...

And with it, in an official sense, the WSFS. For the next 20 years, small meetings were held in Chester Cuthbert's home.

Between 1975 and 1977, there was a resurgence in Winnipeg fandom. Michael Hall writes in *Schmag* #2 (Dec. 1978) that "people would come over at various times, and discuss SF, fandom, and whatever else came along. (Randy Reichardt) decided to try and get a local fan group going, and the WSFS was as good a start as any ..."

Our story now becomes the story of Decadent Winnipeg Fandom, a loose association of fans who socialized, went to cons, and put out fanzines, including Reichardt's *Winding Numbers*.

Several members of DWF were friends of Randy's from the University of Manitoba; others were met at a talk by Judith Merrill in Winnipeg (in 1975 or 1976), or at Chester Cuthbert's home, such as Stu Gilson, and Garth Danielson. I associate Danielson most strongly with his fanzine *Schmag*, and some running gag called "lard

fandom". Chris Rutkowski read of the Winnipeg SF Society in 1973 or 1974, in a copy of *Other Worlds* picked up at the Red River Bookstore; John Robert Colombo says in *Years of Light* that "Winnipeg has always been a good city for fandom, for it has had more than its share of used-book dealers ... associations, and collectors." Mike Hall was recruited in June '77, he wrote in *Schmag*, when Randy Reichardt spotted his change of address in *Karass* (then North America's main news fanzine, later succeeded by *File 770*).

So about this time, DWF asked Cuthbert's permission to use the name WSFS, which he gave. Under this name they produced a radio show, "Step Beyond", in the late 1970s, sponsored by Peter Shott (co-owner of the Red River Bookstore), and held Uncon in 1978.

WSFS held Uncon on Sept. 9, a one-day con with over 550 attendees. Reichardt indicated in *Winding Numbers* #6 that the hope was to inject new blood into WSFS (and DWF).

We've got a huckster room ... and another area ... that'll house the WSFS people (DWF, basically), as well as a refreshment table, and a stuffed bison that we all really believe to be a Venusian Dog. We're also showing mandatory films, including 2001 and *The Making of Silent Running*, along with some NFB shorts and *Bambi Meets Godzilla* The only possible hassle that could occur is an onslaught of Trekkies.

It was very successful, and encouraged further development.

Then, as Chris Rutkowski indicates in *Swamp Gas Journal* (Dec. '83), "most of the core of WSFS left Winnipeg

... what was left was a group of not-as-seriously-dedicated individuals ..."

Reichardt wrote ironically in 1978: "Winnipeg is not disintegrating ... Winnipeg fans never die; they just move to Edmonton. Temporarily." Several are still in Edmonton.

Reichardt also wrote:

It is unfortunate that those who remained after many of us left didn't continue the work ... It was always my understanding . . . that everything we had worked towards never came to pass after we left, and that saddens me ...

Chris Rutkowski writes:

Even at this point, WSFS still had speakers at most meetings and tried to organize discussion groups. However, this is where the 'new' WSFS failed to cut it. Most of the remaining 'original' members took a dim view of Trekdom, which alienated the Trekkers, who happened to make up a majority at one point.

1981 was regrettable for two things. J. Grant Thiessen, a used-book dealer and specialist in SF, had been issuing *The Science Fiction Collector* from Manitoba for a while, containing checklists and bibliographies covering Canadian publications, such as Harlequin Books' short-lived SF line and the Canpulp; but this periodical folded with #15 in 1981. Also, as Reichardt writes:

In the fall of 1981, Steve George published a scathing editorial about mid-70s Winnipeg fandom, better known as Decadent Winnipeg Fandom, or DWF, in *Zosma* #17. It was followed by a number

of letters in *Zosma* #20. The editorial was full of many inaccuracies and accusations, and it infuriated me to the point where I wrote George a five-page letter that he never published ...

By 1983, Chris Rutkowski could write in *Swamp Gas Journal*:

... Out of over half a million people, there are only three small groups of SF fans (in Winnipeg), all somewhat different. The largest group, by a large margin, is Star Trek Winnipeg, which was born, ironically, from the long-defunct Winnipeg SF Society, itself a child of Decadent Winnipeg Fandom. STW boasts an average of 50 to 60 members at each meeting, with a membership list of some factor times that amount. It is in the black, and has successful social and public events. It is the major SF group in the city of the moment. There exists a small true SF group, headed by John Mansfield, very low profile and only slightly active. Then there is a somewhat less active group of former WSFS members, who occasionally talk about science fiction.

In 1984, fanac began to reappear. John and Linda Ross-Mansfield had been living in Winnipeg for some time (and not answering letters asking about *Northern Lights*, Linda's quondam newszine), when they decided to set up KeyCon. Reichardt wrote in *Winding Numbers* #7 (1984);

... Winnipeg is about to hold its first convention. Unfortunately, those organizing it (who are not connected to the old gang at all) have decided to

hold it one week before V-Con. Mistake. It's doubtful they'll attract anyone from this area as a result. A better time would have been the end of June ...

Nevertheless, by all reports that have come this way, KeyCon worked out. (I conclude that this demonstrates something Taral Wayne of Toronto had mentioned to me some time earlier. North American fans fall more or less into different regional fandoms, by going to cons mostly in a 'circuit' defined by reasonable travelling distance, e.g. the Pacific Northwest. KeyCon, evidently, was more of a Midwest convention. Few fans would have to choose between the two Canadian conventions in May.)

John Robert Colombo says something in *Years of Light* which I find applicable at this point:

The thinning ranks of the older fans were swamped by battalions of new and young fans, but these were strange beings: youngsters who, instead of buying *Analog* or paging through back issues of *Astounding*, simply turned on their television sets and watched astounding things happen.

Star Trek may have turned on a generation to science-fiction notions, but it turned off that generation to the literature of science fiction. This was the first generation of science-fiction fans who did not read at all.

They called themselves Trekkers; others called them Trekkies.

Be this as it may, I gather there are some mediafen who don't read. (My own bias is that the Star Warts are the totally illiterate ones ...) The older fans seem to have held, towards Trekkers, the contempt some of us feel

when someone persists in not accepting, appreciating or adopting our own values. But the Trekkers might not have been as adrift from fan-ish reality as some Star Warts I have known.

Meanwhile, questions were being asked in the loccol of *Maple Leaf Rag* about Winnipeg fanac, specifically by one Mike Daly. He asked once in MLR #8 (Aug. '84) for information on current Winnipeg fanac, and in #9, he wrote:

Chris (Rutkowski) seems to remember the WSFS as a noble experiment into which many people poured a great deal of effort, and STW as a sub-fannish group that has somehow managed to survive long enough to become relatively well-known.

I remember the WSFS as a not-so-noble experiment that failed miserably due, to a large degree, to the appalling apathy of its founding fathers (and mother). As a member, you were never: sure as to who was running what; what, if anything, was being done with your membership dues, or even who the head honcho was (it seemed to vary from day to 'day as the buck was passed). There was just never any sense of stability in the society whatsoever and nobody really cared enough to give it any. WSFS was an abysmal failure almost from start to finish. (My emphasis — GS.)

Apparently no-one, up to the time Mike Daly wrote, had spoken a word about the WSFS' history before 1979,

which is apparently why Mike thought it was an entirely new group.

Randy Reichardt and Chris Rutkowski wrote some responses, with varying degrees of *tsuris*; this history was the result.

Mike Daly later wrote (contritely):

Randy makes a more than valid point when he suggests that I should have included in my letter the time span of my involvement with WSFS. It was a glaring oversight on my part that unnecessarily lumped what may have been many good years for the WSFS in with the horrid year that I witnessed as a member. I apologize. I was, at the time I wrote ... under the impression that WSFS was a new group ... That impression lasted until I received a phone call from Chester D. Cuthbert the day MLR #9 arrived in my mail box I realize now that I should have checked to make sure ... My fault entirely.

What we had here was a failure to communicate. The same sort of failure occurs repeatedly in many groups.

What we have in Winnipeg, also, is different strokes for different folks. Chris Rutkowski, after writing about Winnipeg fanhistory, comments:

... fandom is different things to different people. In addition, fandom itself changes, apart from the changing views of the fans. To me, fandom was a laid-back gathering of people with similar interests, who often partied together, laughed, talked, and sometimes even mentioned SF in passing. Even now, those who best embody the spirit of the old WSFS still meet privately, well apart from STW, or

WinSFA, or even (shudder) the Knight Rider Fan Club.

I will also point out that I frequently spoke out in support of STW during the dying years of WSFS. Not because I think that Trek is OK, but because I did recognize that the individuals involved in it were actually doing things ... As well, I realized that fandom had changed to the point where Trek clubs, Star Wars clubs, comics clubs, etc. are the norm now, and heavy discussion groups are on the way out.

... I think there is a minority of us left out there. I think this "invisible college" ... will act as the Second Foundation for fandom for a time to come; but for the moment, go ahead and be involved in Trek, D&D or whatever ... I don't believe in one kind of fandom as being "better" than another.

(Author's note: The foregoing article covers Winnipeg fanhistory up to 1984; current members of KeyCon, WinSFA and the upcoming Winnipeg Worldcon committee will be more prepared to cover events since that time. —GS.)

CONadian, the 1994 World SF Convention, is, of course, in Winnipeg. Membership until September 30, 1993, is C\$95/US\$85 attending, C\$30/US\$25 supporting, and C\$35/US\$30 for children. Mailing address is Box 2430, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4A7.

WILL THE CYCLE BE UNBROKEN?

by Dale Speirs

Nikolai D. Kondratieff was a Russian economist who proposed that the world's economies moved in long waves of about fifty or sixty years. He was born in 1892, and as a student in prerevolutionary Russia studied economics. In 1916 he was with the economic section of the Union of Zemstvos (a zemstvo is a district or provincial political unit). He landed on his feet after the revolution of the following year and became Deputy Minister of Food. He began studying the long-term behaviour of economies in 1919 and published until 1928. He was arrested by Bolsheviks in 1930 and his subsequent life is unknown. His crime was stating that the economy moved in sixty year cycles that had little to do with capitalism versus communism. More particularly, capitalism would not die from its excesses but continue to alternate between boom and bust. This was not what Marxists wanted to hear from one of their own.

To further add to the problems in understanding Kondratieff long waves, the article which anglophones know him by was an abridged translation of a German translation of the original Russian article. Not surprisingly, double translation and editing corrupted his original statements and made many anglophone economists ignore his work. It was a 1988 paper in ATLANTIC ECONOMIC JOURNAL by Vincent Tarascio that finally analysed Kondratieff's work as it should have been done a long time ago.

I'm using Tarascio's paper to summarize the basic points of Kondratieff's work. The foundation of the belief in long waves was a set of time series such as commodity prices for England, France, and U.S.A., interest rates on English and French bonds, English wages, volume of foreign trade in England and France, private savings of the French, and other data. Kondratieff fitted the data to a smoothed deviation curve, and the plotted curves showed an average 54-year swing. His paper showed three long

waves as of 1928. The first one for which he had data began in the late 1780s/early 1790s with a high point in the early 1800s. The second wave started from the bottoming out of the middle 1800s, topping in the early 1870s and hitting bottom again just before the turn of the century. The third wave began in the 1890s, rose to a peak about World War One, and was, according to Kondratieff, scheduled to decline in the late 1920s to early 1930s. It should be noted that the long wave is variable, from fifty to sixty years, not exactly the average of 54 years.

Kondratieff related a number of sociopolitical events to the long waves. In the decline phase of the cycle, technological innovation increased, and was applied to the economy as the wave began a new upswing. He also noted that wars and revolutions were more likely in an upswing. A third pattern was that agricultural prices were depressed during the downswings for an extended period of time. And finally, short-term trade cycles were dampened or intensified depending on what part of the long wave they occurred in.

Economists have never been in agreement on whether or not long waves really exist or are just pseudopatterns generated by a fluke in the data. More seem to be in favour of the long waves than opposed, however. In a 1991 issue of ECONOMIES ET SOCIÉTÉS, Philippe Norel argues that economic history is simply a succession of discontinuances. Simultaneously, Jan Reijnders did a study examining statistical methods used to calculate the long waves. In his book LONG WAVES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, it is concluded that there is indeed such a pattern in the world economy. A 1987 book by Solomos Solomou PHASES OF ECONOMIC GROWTH 1850 - 1973 doesn't see long waves, but rather irregular 'shocked waves' triggered by random events. There are many other articles on long waves, most for rather than against. I myself lean towards the long waves because they seem to fit reality. Opponents to long waves usually resort

[continued next page]

to subtle statistical methods to destroy any periodicity in the data, which leads me to suspect that if you need statistics to prove something doesn't exist, then there is no proof.

In the decline phase of a Kondratieff wave, technological innovations increase as desperate manufacturers try to reduce their costs by new labour-saving devices or methodology. It takes time to work these innovations into an economy, but once they arrive and are integrated, the economy improves and the wave swings up again. This is illustrated by our own times, as the computer revolution of the 1980s is doing away with middle management, who are no longer needed to collect and analyse data. By the late 1990s, this integration should have filtered into the economy and an upswing begun around the turn of the millenium. We are currently in a decline that began in the 1970s; real incomes have not changed in two decades or have gone down, which is why so many wives now work instead of staying home with the children. In a 1987 issue of the JOURNAL OF INSTITUTIONAL AND THEORETICAL ECONOMICS, Wilhelm Krelle suggests that innovation cycles are the inducers of long waves. The next upswing will begin about 2003 or so, according to Peter Hall and Paschal Preston in their book THE CARRIER WAVE. It will be sparked by a new information technology that is still in the formative stages at the moment.

This is not to say that we will have sweetness and light in the 2000s. Vincent Tarascio writes in the Spring 1989 issue of the journal HISTORY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY that a clear pattern of increased waves exist in the early and the late stages of an upswing.

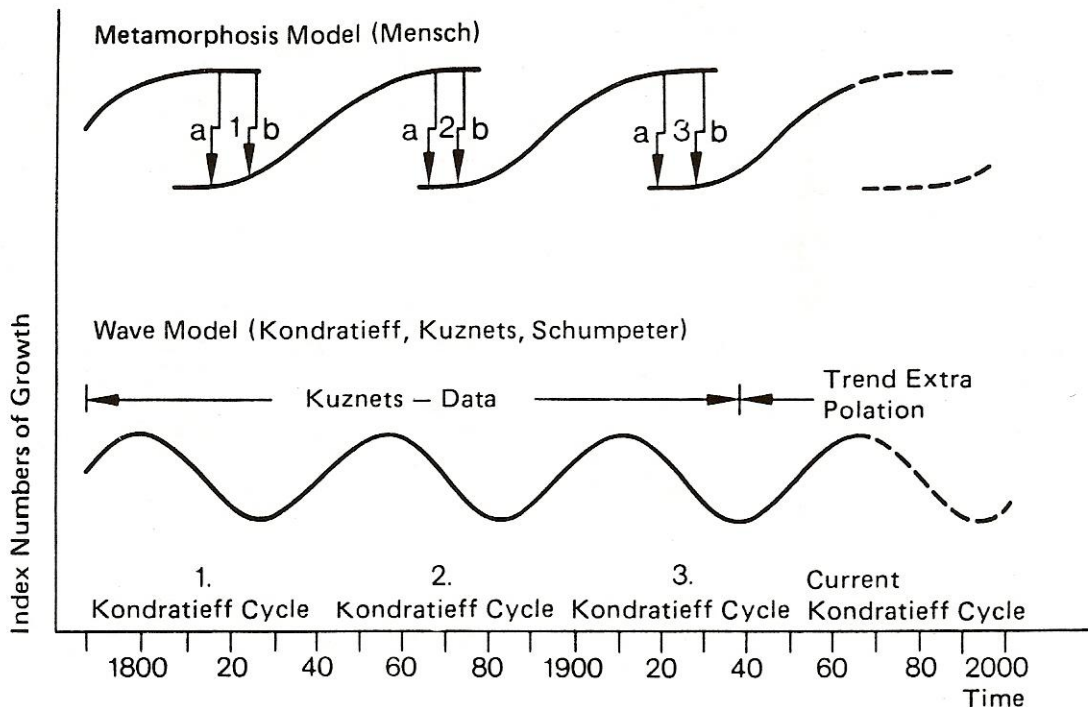
The decline experienced during a Kondratieff nadir brings with it a decline in interest rates. Initially, with a decline in real income going along with it, there is no incentive to save, and people need the money to get by, not to store. But savings start to increase as prices fall, for it costs less to live on, and disposable income

goes up. More savings means more and cheaper capital, and thus more investment in new innovations. The wave turns upward. Innovation in machinery means a greater demand for raw materials. There is always a lag between production and consumption. The upswing has more production than consumption. Demand catches up and as basic needs are satisfied, production shifts to non-productive use of capital, while savings decrease as everyone spends to beat inflation. Interest rates go up to try and attract more capital, prices increase to match the demand, and eventually the economy passes a point where the wave crests. Too much debt is incurred and a liquidity crisis begins. J. Ray Estefania is Chief Actuary/Economist with a U.S. government agency, and in his 1988 book VICTORY OVER THE GRAND DEPRESSION shows how the liquidity crisis began in the 1980s even as most lumpenproletariat or stock speculators thought the show would go on forever. Now, as we try to climb out of the Kondratieff nadir, our economies are still dragging under the weight of debt. But most of it can be paid off or written off by the end of the decade. A new wave will then begin with cheap money, few debts, and innovative procedures thought up during the desperation of the 1990s.

Kondratieff was not the first to think of long waves. A Briton, Hyde Clark, suggested in an 1847 paper in RAILWAY REGISTER that a long wave had begun in 1793 to finish in 1847. Dutch economists apparently worked on long waves independently at the same time as Kondratieff, a similar case to Wallace and Darwin on evolution. It is tragic that Kondratieff was denounced when he was only 33 for implying "the existence of a continuous evolution of the capitalist economy" instead of predicting the collapse of capitalism as a good Marxist should. And today, newspapers are filled with the blatherings of pundits who talk about global restructuring as if it were an isolated random event instead of the normal workings of a long wave.

The chart below is from Gerhard Mensch's 1979 book *STALEMATE IN TECHNOLOGY*. The bottom graph shows the traditional view of Kondratieff waves. I leave it to you to decide if there is indeed any correlation with the economy as you know it. Mensch himself prefers a slightly different model, based more on catastrophe theory, where

the wave breaks like surf rather than smoothly rolls up and down. The basic principle is still the same. Although many people refer to long waves as cycles, it is not strictly correct to do so, since a cycle will return one to the original starting point, whereas the nadir of each long wave is higher than the last as our lifestyle improves with each generation.



WHO FINANCES SURPLUS PRODUCTION? by Chester Cuthbert

[Editor's note: This article is actually a compilation of several letters of comment sent to me over a number of previous issues. I have tried to merge them as smoothly as possible, but if the article seems to jump about, bear in mind that it was not written in one piece.]

Politicians and economists refuse to discuss my ideas with me. Even an SF fan who is an assistant professor of economics at an American university merely says, "The rhetorical tricks you attempt in your letter aren't nearly subtle enough to trap me. Try something more sophisticated next time.". I replied that I was not educated in economics, but merely studied the economy and had succeeded in making it work for me, instead of my having to work for it as I did during my 38 years in the insurance business.

Apart from newspaper articles during the period of the Aberhart uproar, I've read nothing on Social Credit. My ideas were inspired by Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Robert Blatchford, Robert Theobald, Stuart Chase, Technocracy, and other writings on the so-called Economy of Abundance. The upshot of these writings convinced me that the capitalistic system, while probably the best to deal with scarcity, is consequently not the best to deal with the abundance produced by our efficient technology, because abundance or surplus of material goods means price reductions and no possibility of a profit overall. One of my sisters had been a member of Technocracy until it was outlawed by the Canadian government during World War Two. Conversations with her and other members had confirmed my interest in the Economy of Abundance.

The sole purpose of the machine, or technology, is to do our work for us. To let whole factories remain idle so that people can work is to defeat the whole idea of the machine. A guaranteed annual income is necessary on a

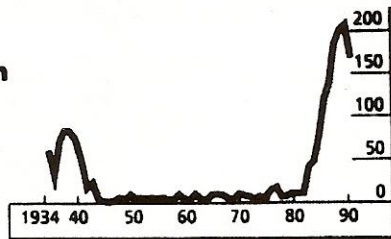
universal basis so that we can enjoy the benefits provided by technology. Universal bankruptcy and the imminent breakdown of the money system is because of surplus real wealth, not because of scarcity of anything. The recession from which we are trying to emerge meant that our industrial plants could be utilized to less than 70% of capacity in Canada. Overproduction meant excess inventories which had to be financed at high interest rates. One of our most expensive surpluses is human labour, which must be financed by unemployment insurance or welfare. All surpluses have to be financed, and whether this is done by individuals or companies, provinces or countries, these surpluses under our profit system mean bankruptcies of one or another or all of these financiers. Such bankruptcies lead to recessions or depressions, to national deficits and world deprivation, simply because the capitalistic system has to be based on scarcity. A profit is only possible if there is scarcity, since abundance means price reductions. We must learn to produce for use, not for profit, and our technology is able and willing to do the job if our economic system will permit it to do so. It is senseless to allow it to produce abundance under an economic system which will be bankrupted by abundance.

Some individuals and businesses can continue to make profits, even in the worst of times, but these successful enterprises deal only in scarcities or unique services not readily available, and can set their prices. Collecting scarce items which are always in demand guarantees a profit which the abundance produced by our efficient technology denies currently to farmers and other efficient operators. My own decision to follow my unorthodox economic ideas resulted in being financially independent against all odds. No one has to be a genius or have assimilated all knowledge to survive. All that is necessary is to know and apply a basic and sufficient specialty.

I can see no solution to our present difficulties except to change the system from production for profit to production for use. During the transition period, an adequate guaranteed annual income (GAI) to eliminate poverty must be implemented. There is no excuse for poverty when surpluses of every kind exist because of our efficient technology. After all, we have machines to do our work for us; these can free us to achieve better education and use of leisure, if we allow them to do so. Old age pensions, family allowances, and other social programs show that the principle of a GAI has already been accepted. All we need is to extend it.

Several books written in the 1930s by C.E.M. Joad, and his strictures on those times apply so well to our current economic and political problems that I am sure we have learned nothing during the sixty years since. Joad points out that good government provides freedom and economic security to its citizens. With our vastly improved technology, abundance can easily be provided. Because we don't distribute it fairly to our citizens by means of a GAI, which would enable us to buy it, the unsold surpluses are bankrupting the businesses which must finance them. It is clear that no one would be robbed if everyone shared the benefits of our machines. To continue to think that more jobs will ease the recession is silly. 1,000,000 to 1,500,000 unemployed people in a short space of time shows that their work is unnecessary; I can see no shortage of anything I need.

Bank failures in United States number



THE ECONOMIST

MARIPOSAN ECONOMICS by Dale Speirs

Canada's greatest writer is Stephen Leacock, known for his humour. His books are still in paperback fifty years after his death: SUNSHINE SKETCHES OF A LITTLE TOWN, ARCADIAN ADVENTURES OF THE IDLE RICH, MOONBEAMS FROM THE LARGER LUNACY, and MY REMARKABLE UNCLE, just to name a few. Leacock's day job was Professor of Economics at McGill University in Montreal, and one of his textbooks on political economy was in print for decades as a standard reference in the anglophone academic community. During the Great Depression, he wrote a number of very readable books on the economic troubles. They are long out of print, nor likely to reappear, but are still lively reading.

WHILE THERE IS TIME: THE CASE AGAINST SOCIAL CATASTROPHE was written during World War Two. It is a call for social security programs. To those who said that the government couldn't afford it, Leacock pointed out the money was always found to fight the Germans and damn the debt, so why couldn't it be found to give people two days of rest a week and a pension? Leacock said about surplus: "In the days before the war, a man out of work could not find an acre of ground that he could dig. It was all property. In a country with millions of acres lying in the sun! He couldn't find a tree to cut for firewood. In a country where the forests and woods extend to the towns themselves — all property! Is that right? People hungry within sight of food, cold within sight of fuel."

In 1922, after the earlier World War, Leacock published THE UNSOLVED RIDDLE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE. Bearing in mind that he was an orthodox economist, not a Sacred or Technocrat, this is what he had to say: "Suppose an observer were to look down from the cold distance of the moon upon the seething anthill of human labour

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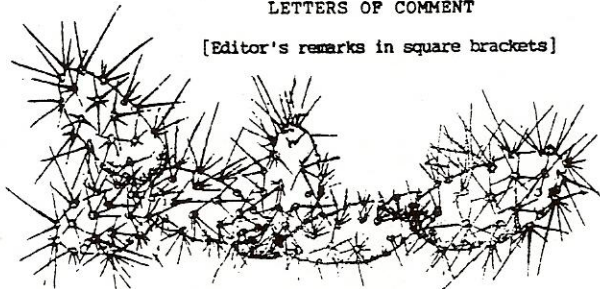
presented on the surface of our globe; and suppose that such an observer knew nothing of our system of individual property, of money payments and wages and contracts, but viewed our labour as merely that of a mass of animated beings trying to supply their wants. The spectacle to his eyes would be strange indeed. Mankind in the mass would be seen to produce a certain amount of absolutely necessary things, such as food, and then to stop. In spite of the fact that there was not food enough to go round, and large numbers must die of starvation or perish slowly from undernutrition, the production of food would stop at some point a good deal short of universal satisfaction. So, too, with the production of clothing, shelter, and other necessary things; never enough would seem to be produced, and this apparently not by accident or miscalculation, but as if some peculiar social law were at work adjusting production to the point where there is just not enough, and leaving it there. The countless millions of workers would be seen to turn their untired energies and their all-powerful machinery away from the production of necessary things to the making of mere comforts; and from these, again, while still stopping short of a general satisfaction, to the making of luxuries and superfluities. The wheels would never stop. The activity would never tire. Mankind, mad with the energy of activity, would be seen to pursue the fleeing phantom of insatiable desire. Thus among the huge mass of accumulated commodities the simplest wants would go unsatisfied. Half-fed men would dig for diamonds, and men sheltered by a crazy roof erect the marble walls of palaces."

Leacock goes on to say about the War: "One might well have thought that such a gigantic misdirection of human energy would have brought the industrial world to a standstill within a year. So people did think. So thought a great number, perhaps the greater number, of the financiers and economists and industrial leaders trained in the world in which we used to live. The expectation was unfounded. Great as is the destruction of war, not even five years of it has broken the productive machine. And the reason

is now plain enough. Peace, also — or peace under the old conditions of industry — is infinitely wasteful of human energy. Not more than one adult worker in ten, or so a leading American economist has declared, is employed on necessary things. The other nine perform superfluous services. War turns them from making the glittering superfluities of peace to making its grim engines of destruction. But while the tenth man still labours, the machine, though creaking with dislocation, can still go on. The economics of war, therefore, has thrown its lurid light upon the economics of peace."

Is there an example of the Economy of Abundance? Star Trek immediately springs to mind. Most SF writers do not go into economics for lack of training or interest. Either the known universe is ruled by megacorporations as per cyberpunk, or a moneyless society exists in situ, such as Star Trek. The latter is easy to explain. Transporter beams are matter transmitters. If you have a matter transmitter, then you automatically have a matter duplicator, since the transmitter beam could be split into several and thus produce duplicates of whatever is put in it. Or the transmitted item can be stored in digitized form in a databank and extra copies run off at will in the future. Matter duplicators will therefore quickly destroy a money-based economy; even the duplicators can be duplicated. To get one, just ask a friend or family member, then produce your own food and clothing from the memory banks. It must be admitted that one would not want to live during the transition period between the two types of economy. Property rights would undergo drastic changes; what would be used for rent or mortgage payments? Would a large landowner even be able to hold onto vast areas of land? Bear in mind that farmland would have no value if food could be duplicated. This would free up immense tracts of land not needed for any purpose. I suspect there would be a Guaranteed Land Allotment and each individual would be entitled to a piece of land to build a house on.

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



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

1993-1-17

The eleventh OPUNTIA starts with a few lines about TAFF, which is a sore subject with me just now for reasons entirely different from those you describe. I've been cutting back on spending wherever possible, out of respect to rising costs, and the fannish funds like TAFF must do without my support for a while. I feel sort of guilty about this even though I didn't contribute every campaign in the past. I know there are various objectionable things involving TAFF, DUFF, and the others, but the organizations have resulted in some excellent long trip reports in previous years, and I think their existence is justified for that accomplishment.

It's hard to believe a city the size of Toronto, with that city's past record of fanac, no longer has a good-sized local club. If a fannish university should someday come into existence, and students must find unusual topics for an obligatory thesis, somebody might decide to do a learned study of why local fan clubs succeed and live indefinitely in certain large cities and come and go in

other metropolises. Can one or two personalities make the difference in a large city to keep together a fan club or cause it to blow to smithereens? Or does the difference derive from cultural conditions in each city or geographical circumstances or some other mundane factor?

[These questions have been studied in the aquarium hobby, based on data of number of clubs, size, etc. It has been concluded that while aquarium clubs can start anywhere, they must have a population base of about 200,000 to draw upon for the longterm success of the club. Below this, the club depends on one or a few enthusiastic members, and if they gaffiate, the club soon dwindles and dies. Interestingly, once a city's population passes a certain point, the club either splits or dwindles. The determining factor seems to be the ease of getting to meetings. In congested metropolitan areas, people stop going to meetings if they have to fight crosstown traffic to get there. Toronto, which is a metropolitan city, used to have a single aquarium club. Now there are smaller, less healthy clubs in Willowdale, Scarborough, Mississauga, North York, etc.. Calgary, on the other hand, has a single large aquarium club. The city's freeways were built during the oil boom for 1,000,000 people but are only running at half-capacity because the oil bust slowed growth. As a result, one can travel from one end of Calgary to the other (30 km) in twenty or so minutes, which encourages unity. Metropolitan areas also will support local specialized clubs devoted to one type of fish, such as cichlids. This is analagous to Trekkies and comics fandom, except that in the aquarium hobby there is none of the sneering, them-versus-us attitude that puts down one group. The problem is that these specialized aquarium clubs bleed members out from the general clubs. Ohio and Detroit, for example, have strong cichlid clubs that deplete the general clubs of members.]

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

1993-1-19

I disagree a bit on fan funds; it's nice to meet one's correspondents, and most of the ones living on other continents can't afford to visit without help. And these days not everyone in fandom can know everyone else; the idea is to vote for someone you do know.

I would have said that WARP is Trekkish and mediaish for those who can't read; that would have drawn much more comment. Sometimes you have to help letter-writers along ...

Considering the Cold War, I'm not sure the USA would have stopped nuclear experimentation just because an accident wiped out Detroit. Much more likely that Canada would have stopped because the same accident also took out Windsor.

[Since Windsor is the Canadian equivalent of Cleveland, I am awfully tempted to throw in a joke here about how it wouldn't have been missed. But I won't.]

Media fandom as such has its own cons, as well as being included in SF cons. I suspect it will eventually split completely, as comics fandom has done. Is there still a literary-oriented rock fandom? There was a rock APA for a while.

FROM: Joseph Major
4701 Taylor Boulevard #8
Louisville, Kentucky 40215-2343

1993-1-21

I never paid much attention to the various fan funds, but I suppose the Trekkies and other media maniacs can discover them someday. Perhaps the initial barrier of "Prove that you are not a fakefan" they put up has kept me from

plugging. Remember the (in)famous "Hold Over Funds" ad the response to the (in)famous "No Award" for the fanzine Hugo done by someone who noticed that the TAFF nominees had all signed the first ad? If it had not been timed so close to the TAFF deadline I might have taken part just for that.

But then there was the UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR flap, and that in turn harks back to the "How the Grinch Stole Worldcon" flap of MidAmeriCon, and so on and soon back no doubt to New Fandom seeing the Futurians as a special interest group unconnected to mainstream fandom. Nothing ever changes, it just gets rerun with a new cast of clowns.

And so we must bid farewell to the bonny, bonny banks of the Fraser, I see. That too is a place where nothing ever changes, it just gets rerun with a new cast of clowns. It also shows the limits of fan current affairs writing, where the writer cannot go too deeply into such matters as V-Con 19 or the Harlan Ellison show without risking lawsuit from involved parties. I may be going too far with this.

[Garth has written on this subject for both BCSFAZINE and OPUNTIA, and to be fair to him it should be noted for the record that both editors have held him back a bit on this. He is a braver man than either of us and boldly goes where no editor has been before. It's just that we don't have his nerves.]

Culloden novels I know nothing of. The second edition of Sir J.C. Squires' anthology IF IT HAD HAPPENED OTHERWISE had an essay "If: A Jacobite Fantasy" on the topic of Bonnie Prince Charlie pressing on from Derby to Oxford, instead of falling back from there into the Highlands. So George II panics and flees to Hanover, leaving Britain to the Tories.

FROM: Ned Brooks 1993-1-19
713 Paul Street
Newport News, Virginia 23605

As to the TAFF ballot, I certainly wouldn't bother with it if I knew none of the candidates. This has happened, but generally I know at least one of them. As to the secret ballot that you nevertheless have to sign, I suppose it is the only way to prevent endless hoaxes. Assuming the ballotcounter is an honourable fan, your vote is secret enough.

I rather agree with you that SENARY would have to be a hell of a fanzine to be worth \$11. Is the title a reference to the late great Rick Sneary, who was prone to creative mis-spelling?

[According to the editorial, the name SENARY was chosen at random by flipping through a dictionary. Reminds me of one of Calgary's suburbs called Midnapore. It was a separate village 30 km south of Fort Calgary a century or so ago, but was swallowed up by urban sprawl in 1979. But back then, the postmaster was having trouble thinking up a name for the village, so he flipped the pages of an atlas and stuck a pin down at random. It punctured the name of Midnapore, India, and so it was the settlement was given its name. 'senary' means a thing in six parts, multiples of six, or in other words, thrice a binary.]

I almost was tempted to send for FUTURES PAST, but you don't name the editor, and I always have the feeling that with fanzines you should at least know the editor's name. Let's see, if they started with 1926 to do a zine on each year, they will have to do 66 issues just to catch up to 1992. At \$20 for six, that's \$220 just to catch up! And that's not allowing for inflation. However, few fanzines have ever lasted 66 issues.

[It is more of a semiprozine. Jim Emerson is the editor, if that will help. Well printed and illustrated. Sample

copy is \$5, for six for \$20, from FUTURES PAST, Box 610, Convoy, Ohio 45832. Editorial Advisory Board has Ackerman, Moskowitz, Ashley, Bloch, Kyle, Ellison and other big names. Third issue was out last autumn, so I expect if you hustle in your \$20 you could still get all the back issues to have a complete run.]

FROM: Lloyd Penney 1993-1-22
412 - 4 Lisa Street
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6

The fan funds, in many ways, encourage visiting other fan groups but it is an exclusive group that takes part in them. I'd thought that I might run for TAFF in 1990 but realized that few people knew me overseas. With fan politics running rampant across Canada, I don't think I could run for CUFF. There'd be somebody trying to block my candidacy. This isn't paranoia; I just think that I couldn't possibly win.

Garth's conclusion of his Vancouver fan history finishes off a great four-part article. I found little to comment on, but to agree with Garth that Vancouver is a typical fan community.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Chester Cuthbert