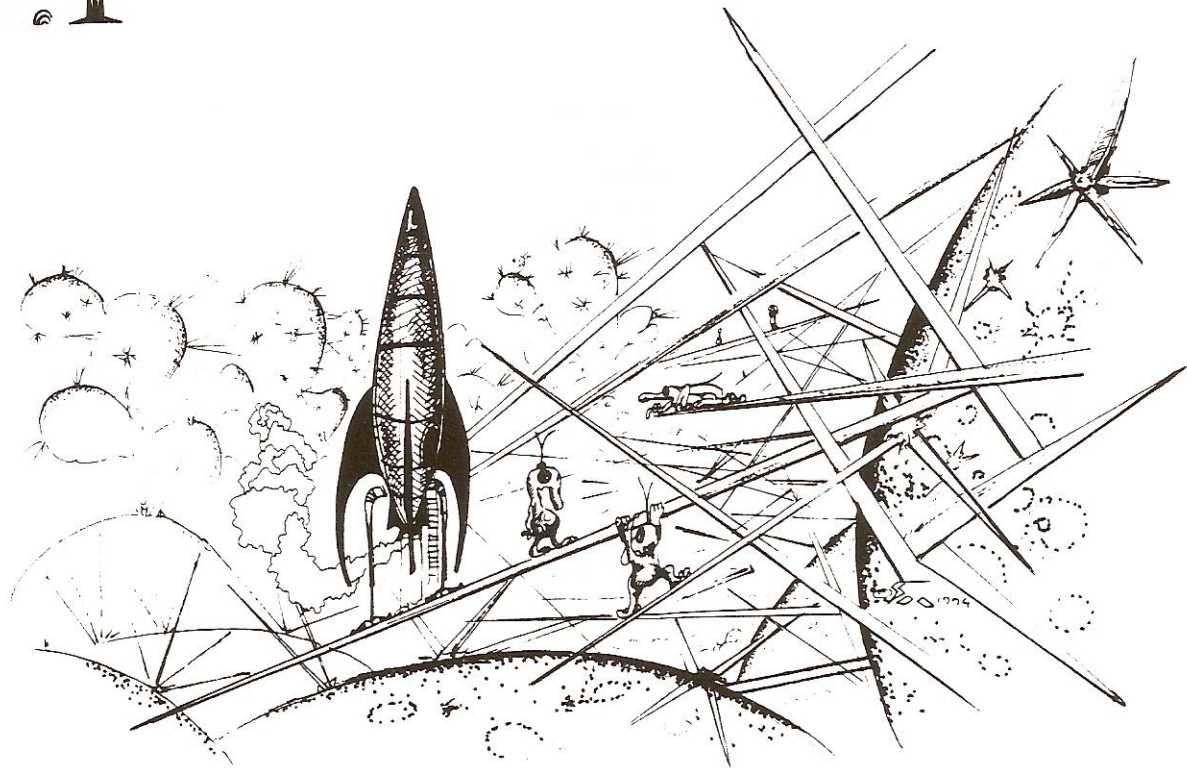


OPUNTIA

19.1



OPUNTIA #19.1

June 1994

ISSN 1183-2703

OPUNTIA is published irregularly by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Available in trade for your zine, \$2 cash, or letter of comment. Unsigned reviews by Dale Speirs, others as credited.

ART CREDIT: The cover art was done by Franz Miklis, A-5151 Nussdorf 64, Austria.

IN MEMORIUM: DAVID DREW

I was shocked to learn of the sudden death of David Drew of Calgary on May 5, 1994. He was only 23. Cause of death was an asthma attack. His father Ross advises me that David's lungs collapsed and the hospital staff were unable to revive him. Memorial donations may be made to the Alberta Lung Association or your local equivalent.

David had just become involved in the zine world a short time ago. Had he been given the time, his name would have become well known amongst our subset. He had letters in OPUNTIA, and I reviewed his zine MORGGING BORGUS a while ago. He had also published elsewhere, including a local alternative-press tabloid called VOX. One of his particular interests was the Economy of Abundance.

My condolences to his family on their loss.

ZINE REVIEWS

[The term 'The Usual' means that the zine is available for \$2 cash, pre-arranged trade for your zine, or a contribution such as letter of comment, article, or art. It is best to see a copy of the zine or send a query before sending art or articles, to ensure that your contributions are appropriate. I mention this because people send me poetry, fiction, or naked-barbarian art, none of which is presently published in OPUNTIA. So check first, and avoid a waste of postage.]

QUIPU #4 (The Usual from Vicki Rosenzweig, 33 Indian Road, 6R, New York, New York 10034) A perzine of life in New York City, congoing, and local performing arts. She is mistaken by tourists as part of the Greenwich Village scene and has her picture taken by them so they can show the folks back home what beatniks look like. As I read this zine, it struck me as surprising that people there actually walk around on the sidewalks to markets or taverns. We up here in the Great White North are conditioned by mass media to believe that any pedestrian or subway rider in a large American city is a target for driveby shootings and other mayhem.

FOSFAX #168 (The Usual from FOSFA, Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281) Years from now, when the usual arguments about fanzines-aren't-what-they-used-to-be are underway, FOSFAX will be cited as an example of the glory that was. In the ish at hand, which we will sneer at now and revere twenty years on, there is 64 pages of microprint. Lengthy book reviews, spy stuff, American politics (the Right seems to be winning in the zine), a loc column that should delight verbose letterhacks looking for new outlets. Some SF mentions, too. Some fuss about health care (Question: low taxes and high crime or high taxes and low crime?)

RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY V9#2 (The Usual from Leland Sapiro, Box 958, Big Sandy, Texas 75755) A zine that can't make up its mind whether it is a fanzine or an academic journal. Various book reviews which are a cut above the normal gosh-wow reviews seen in most fanzines. Lots of poetry and locs. An academic review of the BLADE RUNNER movie, subtitled "The subversion and redefinition of categories".

ZX #4 (The Usual from Andrew Murdoch, 2563 Heron Street, Victoria, British Columbia V8R 5Z9) Besides the usual reviews and locs, an article pointing out some of the pitfalls in computer/brain interfaces. Jason Gauthier is quite funny when he considers what happens when the wrong personality imprints are used (ref. cyberpunk SF): "Imagine a fighter jet with a cyber gunner ... "Sir, bogeys at twelve o'clock. Do you want evasive maneuvers?" "No, Mr. Bunny. Just hop, hop, hop by Mrs. Green's house..."

FROM SUNDAY TO SATURDAY (The Usual from Don Fitch, 3908 Frijo, Covina, California 91722) An occasional perzine with reviews, con report, a diatribe against copyright in fanzines and in favour of freeware, and an event called "Zine Scream" which was non-SFish.

VISIONS OF PARADISE #52, 53, and 54 (The Usual from Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828-1023) Diarizines in the life of a school teacher, with a busy life applying for promotions, getting kids to soccer games, snow, and buying a new house. Also includes a review column "The Jaundiced Eye".

OBSCURER PUBLICATIONS #26 (US\$2 for sample copy from Jim Romanesko, Box 1334, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201) One of the two best reviewzines I get (ANGRY THOREAUAN is the other). This zine specializes in in-depth reviews of a few zines rather than a lot of capsule comments. All the scandalmongering you pretend not to like. Recommended.

BT REVIEW #2 (The Usual from Brian Tramel, Box 74, Steele, Missouri 63877) A four-page reviewzine. About half the zines are wrestling or games, the rest a bit of everything. Lots of non-SF addresses for those who want to cast their net wider.

ANGRY THOREAUAN #8 (US\$3 to Randall Tin-ear, Box 2246, Anaheim, California 92814) A freebie in southern California that does lots of zine and band reviews. Unless those bands suddenly start touring the Great Lone Land, I am not likely to hear any of them, but that was why God gave us cassettes and CDs. At the risk of upsetting Randall, I'll say that AT reminds me of FACTSHEET FIVE in its glory days. Not, I hasten to add, the feeble zine that Seth puts out, but the real thing that stirred up zine pubbers everywhere back when. Lots of locs and miscellaneous articles. Mistress Anja writes a column about fantasy followers. Not our meaning of fantasy but rather the kind supplied on 1-900 telephone lines. Anja writes about what the femmes on the other side think of those weird sex calls they get. Tin-ear tells stories about life driving forklifts, and elsewhere the question is asked why one never sees silver coins anymore in the pocket change (because they've been melted down). Very subjective zine reviews but quite useful. Recommended.

CHERNOBYLIZATION #6 (The Usual, a used SF paperback, or US\$2 in banknotes only. From Alexander Vasilkovsky, poste restante, General P.O., 252001 Kyiv-1, Ukraine) One of the most important anglophone zines published today, providing as it does a window on the Slavic SF world. In this issue is a survey of post-Soviet zines, most failing because of economic chaos. Con reports from Ukraine and Lithuania. The latter, by Inna Zharkevich, mentions in passing what sounds like a fascinating game, a reverse Monopoly based on the Soviet system, called "The Queue". Says Inna: "... we're playing ... "Hurrah! Backdoor goods! Shit! Into jail! And with confiscation of all possessions!"" Recommended.

WHITE TRASH #2 (The Usual from Thomas and Denise Longo, Box 130121, Roseville, Minnesota 55113-0121) I have to admit I'm rather baffled by this zine. If I understand correctly, this may have something to do with Minnesota SF club feuding, and possibly is a hardcopy version of an Internet posting. Something about Shoulder Dragon Police at Twin Cities cons mixed up with druggies and pederasts. Then you turn the page and find movie reviews mixed in with political material. The Clintons really seem to have the ability to push some people's buttons. Back page is a wrapup of threats to liberties from gun control to politically correct speech.

IT GOES ON THE SHELF #12 (The Usual from Ned Brooks, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, Virginia 23605) An extensive reviewzine that specializes in out-of-the-way and older books, rather than the latest batch of bestsellers. You won't get many of these books at the local chainstore but the library might have some; otherwise you'll have to search the secondhand bookstores.

MASTHEAD V7#4 (C\$3.75 from North Island Sound Ltd., 1606 Sedlescomb Drive, Unit 8, Mississauga, Ontario L4X 1M6) A glossy trade journal, not a zine, that is sold at newsagents. This periodical covers the magazine industry in Canada, both small-press and trades, but not alternative press. All the usual industry news, lots of ads from printers, the usual fuss about postal rates, etc. This is a special issue looking back at 1993 and how the industry did. It was a record year, with 114 new magazines launched and 63 going kaput, some doing both in the same year. As with amazines, there were a lot of one-shots.

THE CAFE OF THE ONE BRIDGE #7 (The Usual from Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Avenue SW, Seattle, Washington 98166) A reviewzine in the style of IT GOES ON THE SHELF, concentrating on older books. It starts off with an account of a tour of Canada, with a stopoff at Chester and Muriel Cuthbert's place to visit and view his tremendous book collection.

FOR THE CLERISY #2 (Trade or loc only, no cash, from Brant Kresovich, Riga Business School, Riga Technical University, Skolas 11, LV-1010 Riga, Latvia. Will accept zines other than your own; don't toss unwanted ones but send to Kresovich in trade.) An anglophone zine about life in Latvia. Kresovich teaches English and discusses life there as an expatriate. Interesting reading.

LOWER ROSEDALE REVIEW #3 (The Usual from C.F. Kennedy, Box 40, 90 Shuter Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K6) A reviewzine of zines, including small-press material.

REDISCOVERIES NEWSLETTER #14 (The Usual from Mark Harris, 3712 North Broadway #190, Chicago, Illinois 60613) This is another reviewzine specializing in oldie-but-goodie books but with a difference. The editor doesn't list his favourites, the readers do. Their recommendations are photocopied exactly as received, and may slow a reader down trying to read some handwriting.

BUSSWARBLE #13 (The Usual from Michael Hailstone, 14 Bolden Street, Heidelberg, Victoria 3084, Australia) For those who think Elvis shot JFK or who otherwise love a good conspiracy, here is the place. Feuding with Joseph Nicholas, Holocaust revisionism, and, rather incongruously, spelling reform. Myself I find it hard to believe in conspiracies. It may be possible for one or two people to hide a conspiracy a long time, or many people to hide it a short time, but not for many people to hide it a long time. Doesn't matter if you are the CIA or the City of Calgary Transportation Dept., sooner or later the empire-builders, ambitious backstabbers seeking promotion by creating vacancies above them, and just plain careless will out the secret.

FILE 770 #102 (US\$2.50 from Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Avenue #2, Van Nuys, California 91401) A newszine on fandom, tends to specialize in Worldcons but other notes as well.

GALACTO-CELTIC NEWSFLASH #10 (The Usual from Franz Miklis, A-5151, Nussdorf 64, Austria) This zine has bloomed from a few pages in #9 to sixty pages in #10. Lots of art and locs, some strange stories, and an enthusiastic approach to fandom. Emphasis on Germanic and Scandinavian fandom, but the zine is in English, so anglophones need not pass it by.

MIMOSA #15 (The Usual from Dick and Nicki Lynch, Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875) This zine specializes in fan-histories, but the issue at hand further runs to a theme of food and fandom. Good food, bad food, and likewise in fanhistories. An account of secret apas in Sweden, with particular reference to one called Cucumber, thus neatly tying in with the theme.

GEGENSCHEIN #67 to #69 (The Usual from Eric Lindsay, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde, New South Wales 2112, Australia) A combination perzine/reviewzine. Lots of capsule reviews of newer books, locs, and the saga of moving computer operations at work to a new floor.

various OWLET zines and titles (The Usual from Harry Andruschak, Box 5309, Torrance, California 90510-5309) When people say Harry writes purple prose, they aren't talking about his literary style. His zines are produced on spirit duplicators in purple ink. The batch at hand are on LA fan feuding, Alcoholics Anonymous, work, illness, and the truth about haggis. Haggis, I might add, is a food for people who won't eat hot dogs because they contain cow lips.

THE ZINE #6 (£1.65 from Zine Scene Ltd., Box 288, Shere, Guildford, Surrey GU5 9JS, England. I didn't think the Brits had box numbers; this is the first one I've seen.) I bought this at a newsagents because the title is quite the contradiction to the glossy full-colour of the mag itself. Instead of the underground alternative that a true zine should be, this is a musiczine trying to pretend it is part of the revolution but coming off more as a camp follower. They have even registered the title as

a trademark. Band reviews, comics, fan material from a lot of excitable teenagers, articles desperately trying to sound in-your-face. A cluttered layout that makes WIRED look readable by comparison. The computer has done wonders for DIY publishing, but it still cannot teach people that just because you have 50 fonts on the disk you shouldn't use them all on one page.

SHIFT V2#3 (C\$3.95 from Shift Magazine, Suite 407, 174 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2C2) A glossy small-press magazine subtitled "New Media and Culture". The usual type of Canada Council-subsidized stuff, but better than most because it only contains a few pages of fiction and poetry to skip over. The rest is a look at various media changes affecting the way we communicate. I noticed a bit lifted from Internet, being advice from Chuq Von Rospach about on-line manners. A look at video games by Evan Solomon, who considers they fail because they are static, with no plots or characterization, just the same chase and kill. An interview with WIRED editor Louis Rossetto, who cheerfully reprints angry e-mail from readers complaining about the magazine's layout. There is a look at a Portuguese chapel built out of human bones by monks who wanted their congregation to remember that life is brief. A few interviews with Toronto artists nobody ever heard of and who will be little noted nor long remembered.

TEXAS SF INQUIRER #52 (The Usual from Alexander Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78239-4022) A clubzine with the usual reviews, locs, and reports. In this ish, Evelyn Leeper does a series of panel reports that are extensive and well done, the way we would all like to report cons but never get around to doing.

THINGUMYBOB #11 (The Usual from Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett near Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF, England) The S&M issue that had me wincing all the way through. I'm not kidding; this ish tells us more than we might care to know about bondage and piercing of body parts.

DEADPAN #1 (E2 from Deadpan, Box 89, Slough SL1 8NA, England) A glossy I picked up at the newsagents, devoted to the British comedy scene. Basically a LOCUS for stand-up comedy. Mostly about local British comedians, but an article wondering how Whoopi Goldberg became famous despite an undistinguished series of movies. Another article is proof that the grass is indeed always greener on the other side, as it laments the poor quality of British sitcoms and wonders why they can't be as good as American ones. This struck me because North Americans are always complaining that our shows aren't as good as the British.

HABAKKUK C3V3 (The Usual from Bill Donaho, 626 - 58th St., Oakland, California 94609) Soon to be mailed out at parcel post rates, the way it is growing, with a loccol that easily rivals FOSFAX. Ted White does extended reviews of fanzines unrivalled for vicious intent, much like a Tory M.P. (British, of course; the Canadian ones are extirpated) going on about family values. Most of the articles are the timebinding fanhistory type, this time on slan-shack fandom.

STET #8 (The Usual from Leah Zeldes Smith, 410 West Willow Road, Prospect Heights, Illinois 60070-1250) A bit thinner of the mimeo this time. Having recently moved to a new house, the Smiths are recovering nicely. Various fanhistories, a bit about everything as long as it was somehow connected to this ish's theme 'Illinois', mostly those who have lived there. An article about Deadheads, the fandom for the band Grateful Dead, comparing with SF fandom. I've done this for aquarium and philatelic fandom, so it is interesting to see this elsewhere. One hopes that the myth that SF fans are somehow better than others is by now laid to rest.

EMPTIES #13 (The Usual from Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham B8 2AG, England) A perzine with stuff by others, such as Dave Langford proposing new superstitions for our modern age. Miscellany on dice and condoms (latex, not fandom that books hotels) And locs.

BARDIC RUNES #8 (\$4 to Michael McKenny, 424 Cambridge Street South, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4H5) A fictionzine devoted to sword and sorcery fantasy. You know the kind; everyone gasps, grunts, shouts, etc., but never "he said!"

ANSIBLE #82 (SASE via Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU) A single-sheet newszine of microprint detailing all the scandal, outrage, and other rubbish that British SFers get up to. The funniest zine I get; Langford has a humorous style of writing.

ETHEL THE AARDVARK #53 (The Usual from Melbourne SF Club, Box 212, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia) A clubzine with the usual news, locs, reviews, and club business. Alan Stewart has an article on why religion is seldom in media SF but more frequent in printed SF, concluding the reason is that mass-media dare not offend anyone by mentioning the subject and possibly losing viewers. A movie or television show needs millions of viewers to earn out a profit; a book can do it with thousands. A good point I think; 25,000 copies of a book is a success, but 25,000 viewers will destroy careers in the studio.

SLUG AND LETTUCE #34 (US\$2 from Christine, Box 2067, Peter Stuy. Stn., New York, New York 10009) A newsprint tabloid punkzine. Reviews of punk albums and zines, the stuff you won't find in the chainstores.

THYME #97/AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS #58/ARTYCHOKE #8 (The Usual from Alan Stewart, Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia) These are three independently operated zines produced as a single zine. Con reports, Ditmar controversy ("There is no new thing under the sun."), book reviews, art reviews, and locs. In reading the Ditmar squabbles, I got the impression that one could take Garth Spencer's history of the Auroras, change the appropriate names and dates, and run it as a Ditmar history with no other editing, and pass it off successfully.

CREATIVITY CONNECTION V5#3 (US\$8 for four issues from Communication Programs, 224 Lowell Hall, 610 Langdon Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703) Sort of a poor man's WRITER'S DIGEST, with a miscellany of advice about writing, market news, and oddball stuff. Advice on ad copywriting, stunt readers (a chap who read ULYSSES out loud in an endurance test), and advice on naming your zine or book. The last is about people who titled their publications with names such as WRITER'S GUIDELINES or EDITOR'S CHOICE, then complain because others also use such titles. I have little sympathy for their troubles. Like a neofan who grandly titles his zine SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW and is surprised to discover that the name was used before, common sense is lacking in an editor who picks a generic name to title a publication.

BCSFAZINE #252 (pre-arranged trade or C\$24 from WCSFA, Box 48478, Vancouver, British Columbia V7X 1A2) Clubzine from the Lower Mainland, aka Lotusland. Leather Goddess Q&A column, gossipmongering, and much more. Probably the best clubzine going in North America.

STICKY QUARTERS #23 (The Usual from Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, Michigan 48224) A perzine, with the latest despatches about little Sarah, now a toddler, Barney the Dinosaur, working for the City of Detroit, and John Berry's regimental stories.

FUTURES PAST #4 (US\$5 for sample copy from Futures Past, Box 610, Convoy, Ohio 45832) A semiprozine of excellent production values, devoted to the history of SF. This is not a mishmash of articles. Rather, each issue is devoted to one year in the history of SF. #4 is about 1929, and discusses the Gernsback bankruptcy, along with chronologies of the year's published and filmed SF. Not just a potted review of the magazines, it includes novels and a surprising number of films. The first 24 strips of Buck Rogers are reprinted, and Sam Moskowitz discusses how the term 'science fiction' came into use. There are biographies of early writers, including a startling photo of

E.E. 'Doc' Smith dressed up as Northwest Smith for the 1962 Worldcon. Lots of bibliographies, a list of contents of the 1929 SF magazines, and their covers. If you are at all seriously interested in the history of SF, I highly recommend you subscribe. Six issues are US\$20 in the USA, US\$28 elsewhere. I don't know if all back issues are still available, but ask for them when you begin your subscription; a complete set from #1 (1926) is a valuable reference and a good investment.

UNDER THE OZONE HOLE #7 (The Usual from Karl Johanson, 4129 Carey Road, Victoria, British Columbia V8Z 4G5) A genzine with some news, locs, a report on anime, and reviews of books and video. Funny cover that could only be done in Canada, about "Star Trek/Voyageur".

GLOBAL MAIL #8 (US\$2 or trade from Global Mail, Box 597996, Chicago, Illinois 60659) This can be described as a FACTSHEET FIVE in reverse, being packed with want ads asking for contributions to mail art shows, compilation tapes, or zines. Truly global, with requests from Uzbekistan to Winnipeg. A biker wants schematics for a spoke gun that can flatten a car tire; I suspect he has been crowded off the road one time too many. The listings include mail art shows, anarchist zines, archives, BBS nets, books, e-mail, compilations, fax nets, rubber stamp art, penpals, exchanges, video, performance art, zines (a South African is soliciting material about chickens), and politics. A whole nuther world out there.

FROZEN FROG #9 (The Usual from Benoit Girard, 1016 Guilaume-Boisset, Cap-Rouge, Québec G1Y 1Y9) In English, so anglophones need not pass it by. Mostly locs, some of substantial content. The main article is a look at the francophone comics that kids in Québec read. Agenial zine.

LITTLE FREE PRESS #105 (US\$1 notwithstanding the title, from Ernest Mann, 714 SE Third Street, Little Falls, Minnesota 56345) A series of singlesheet type zines de-

voted to the Priceless Economic System, what I call the Economy of Abundance. But how do we get there?

FANALYSIS #14 (The Usual from Ray Schaffer, Box 1014, Kapaa, Hawaii 96755) A reviewzine of movies, lots and lots of them. The type of zine Halliwell might have published in his younger days.

INTERESTING! #1 (One-time free sample from Richard Sagall, Box 1069, Bangor, Maine 04402-1069) A bit of everything in this zine, with much material from the oddball reports in the newspapers, weird statistics, a report from the group Medical Accuracy In Media, which points out mistakes in movies or television in scenes involving medics. Opinions on various topics, including doctor's salaries (Sagall is an M.D.).

INCONSEQUENTIAL PYRAMIDS #1 (Probably a couple of bucks, from Tim Richards and Narrelle Harris, International Language Institute, Mohamed Bayoumi Street, Off Merghani Street, Heliopolis, Cairo, Egypt) Harry Andruschak sent this one to me. This zine is published by a couple of Australians currently working in Egypt. This ish carries two major accounts, one of life in Cairo (not that bad as we may think) and the other a tour of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

WARP #27 (The Usual from Montreal SF&F Assoc., Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Québec H2W 2P4) A clubzine put out by mediafans. Emphasis is normally on Star Trek and a lesser proportion of Dr. Who, but this issue is a 15th anniversary look at Battlestar Galactica. Club news and a look back at 1993 cons in the Montreal area.

RELUCTANT FAMULUS #31 (The Usual from Thomas Sadler, 422 West Maple Avenue, Adrian, Michigan 49221-1627) An 11 page introduction where most of us would think an editorial would suffice. But this introduction is a well-written piece of faan fiction, with names from all over fandom

worked into a plot about a hearty party contrived with the aid of a combination transporter/time machine. A few fannish accounts of this and that from here and there, a few book reviews, and angst about the forthcoming implosion of SF.

CONTRACT V6#2 (The Usual from John Mansfield, 321 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B9) This zine is a listing of Canadian cons and related matters. Those who are going to the Winnipeg Worldcon and can afford a side trip might be interested in the August 27th celebration "Flinty's Birthday" in the city of Flin Flon, the only city to be named after an SF character. Details from the City of Flin Flon, Box 100, Flin Flon, Manitoba R8A 1M6. Also in this ish is the 1994 Aurora nominations.

KNARLY KNEWS #44 (The Usual from Henry Welch, 1525 - 16 Avenue, Grafton, Wisconsin 53024-2017) Mostly locs, but stuff from the Welch household and book reviews.

DEROGATORY REFERENCE #77 (The Usual from Arthur Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers, New York 10704-1814) A perzine that this ish concentrates mostly on homosex and e-mail difficulties.

ON SPEC #16 (C\$6 or US\$6 elsewhere from On Spec, Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 5G6) This is Canada's prozine digest, equivalent to ASIMOV'S, although the issue at hand is more ANALOGish with its emphasis on hard SF. I particularly liked Cory Doctorow's story "Résumé", an account of an attempt at SETI during the days of Model T Fords, using fireworks as skywriting to communicate to Centauri Proxima.

DASFAX V26#3 (The Usual from Denver Area SF Assoc., c/o Rose Beetem, 3225 West 29th Avenue, Denver, Colorado, 80211-3705) A clubzine. This issue has program notes for a local film festival that also stand as an extended review of the Quatermass films, well worth reading.

CONADIAN PROGRESS REPORT #6 (Membership until July 15 is US\$125/C\$165 attending, US\$25/C\$30 supporting, after that is US\$150/C\$200 attending. Address is ConAdian, Box 2430, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4A7) Coming into the final turn for WorldCon '94. In this P.R., Anne McCaffrey (GoH) has an article about the weather in Ireland, Hugo ballots are included, and lots of constitutional stuff, fortunately World SF Society, not Canadian. Details on all the bits and pieces such as the art show, dealer bourse, and how to get past Canada Customs. No doubt if some people have trouble getting across the border because they didn't get the rules in advance, they will of course blame ConAdian for it. Don't tell Customs you are working at ConAdian; you'll get dinged \$100 for a work permit. Tell them you are here to see our beautiful forests and lakes, etc. and will only be relaxing, not volunteering. The membership total is 3870, of whom 3004 are Americans, 704 are Canadians, and the rest overseas, mostly Britain, Japan, and Germany. Three of the hotels are booked up; you'd better hustle if you expect a place to stay. There is a report on child care facilities; don't forget to bring the birth certificates. And while Canada has universal medicare, it's universal only for Canadians; buy your own medical insurance before you arrive. Opening ceremonies are on Thursday afternoon, Hugo Awards on Saturday night, and the Masquerade Sunday night.

LAN'S LANTERN #42 (US\$5 from George Laskowski, 1306 Cherokee, Royal Oak, Michigan 48067-3386) Travelogues to Spain and other places, rock-and-roll SF, con reports, a slew of book and movie reviews, fanfiction, days in the life of the editor (they bought a house) and locs. That business of buying a house is starting to be a familiar story in many zines as SF fans collectively age. I predict that about ten years from now we'll start seeing articles on pension plan options and motorhome purchases. Which reminds me that this issue of LL has an article by Andrew Offutt predicting the future, including the fact that only old folk will say "a quarter after six".

DRIFT #54 (The Usual from C.F. Kennedy, Box 40, 90 Shuter Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K6) Photocopy collage art interleaved with angst about the purpose of life, plus a story about the Ten Lost Tribes and where they really ended up. (PLOT SPOILER: Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia)

HILDISVIN #2 (The Usual from Holger Eliasson, Box 171, 114 79 Stockholm, Sweden) '-svin' as in 'swine', that is, pigs are the mascot of this anglophone zine. News of the pig world which I read with interest; although my family farm was strictly beef cattle, my father was a veterinarian whose practice was about one-third hogs. An extended Swedish con report. Most interesting was the facsimile of a Harlan Ellison letter which would be good for a court case in more polite circles. H.E. versus H.E.; a neat symmetry there.

ATTITUDE #1 (The Usual from John Dallman, Flat 4, 27 Terront Road, London N15 3AA, England) Actually from an editorial collective which also includes Pam Wells and Michael Abbott. Not so much just editorial in the collective, as they intend to stage a con as well. The idea is that the common theme to both is argumentation, as if OPUNTIA were to announce a Calgary con on the history of Canadian SF (with Garth Spencer as GoH, of course). Some musings about British zines and cons, a bit about dogs, and zine reviews. I can see vaguely what they're getting at but wonder how well it will turn out in the execution. But the best of luck anyhow, and I look forward to ish #2.

That's all the reviews for this time. I'm told there are a few diehards convinced zinedom is dying or not what it used to be. I don't believe it myself. I get only a fraction of the zines floating out there and cannot afford to trade for many more. The hobby is still vital!

AND NOW A WORD FROM VELCRO LIPS

Eric Hersholt Nielsen is the nephew of actor Jean Hersholt and the brother of actor Leslie Nielsen. Just to get the obligatory mention of SF in this zine out of the way, Leslie is known for his role in the movie FORBIDDEN PLANET and, more recently, the NAKED GUN slapstick comedies. His brother Erik is quite unknown outside Canada, but was one of the most powerful Tories in federal politics. In 1989, after his retirement, Erik published his autobiography, a book that reads like Piers Anthony would if he were a Canadian politician. The book is called THE HOUSE IS NOT A HOME.

For thirty years Nielsen represented the riding of Yukon, rising from backbencher to Deputy Prime Minister before retiring in 1987. (Like most Yukoners, he is a bit snappish about people calling it 'the Yukon' and uses the writer's foreword to lecture the reader on this point. It is much the same with Ukrainians, who dislike their country being called 'the Ukraine'.)

Nielsen's father was a Mountie; in fact, Nielsen's daughter was one too, carrying on the tradition. The family grew up in various places in the Arctic and the prairies. Nielsen served as a bomber pilot in WW2 and trained at CFB Calgary. I was quite interested reading this part of THE HOUSE IS NOT A HOME, as from his description it seems that Nielsen was at a now-vanished flying school directly across the street from my house. After the war, he found himself studying law in Halifax. While there, he became a member of the Maritime Rights Party, since defunct, which advocated separation from Canada for the maritime provinces. This was in 1949, just as Newfoundland joined the Canadian confederation, demonstrating that our politics were just as incoherent then as now. Separatism seems to have died out in the east but still flares up from time to time in the west, and has never gone away in Québec.

Nielsen moved to Yukon. He became involved in the Tory

party there and helped build an organization in the territory, which traditionally voted Liberal. The equally traditional Tory candidate in elections was George Black for whom Nielsen became campaign manager. The federal party put Nielsen in charge of the campaign funds since Black was a lush. Previously Black, when allowed to get near the money, would convert it to booze.

Nielsen had his own airplane and conceived the idea of dropping election leaflets from the air. This idea was abruptly aborted at the first town where it was tried. A Liberal party manager rounded up the town's children and told them he would pay a penny for each leaflet. The kids soon scoured the town clean and Nielsen went back to more conventional methods of campaigning.

A few years later, Nielsen himself stood for office. In 1957 he was elected and began his political career. He was used to speaking to small groups in isolated communities in Yukon. In a territory where everybody knew everybody else and entertainment was thin on the ground, the same bunch of people turned out all the time. One of Nielsen's supporters had followed him on the campaign trail and was so used to hearing the same speech that he would nod off to sleep. Once he did so while smoking a cigar, which burned down to a stub and set his beard on fire. Nielsen had to interrupt his speech and shout at the man to wake up. The audience got the fire out before real harm was done, but the beard now had a large hole in it.

In those days, MPs were poorly paid, and those who lived the furthest from Ottawa, such as Nielsen, had the worst time making ends meet. Nielsen had a law practice and worked on the side as a bush pilot. His political/law work sometimes went into the realm of the bizarre. He tells the story of a placer-miner named Phil. Like many Yukoners, Phil died intestate and with few assets, thus a pauper's burial was needed. Phil was found by his remote cabin, sprawled on the ground from a sudden fatal

[continued next page]

heart attack. The body was well frozen when discovered, with arms and legs spreadeagled. Somehow the Mounties got it to the local undertaker, 'Digger' Cook. Phil having died penniless, he was sent on to the next world with the standard flat rate of \$250 paid by the Public Administrator. Digger Cook wanted an extra \$50 for the trouble in handling Phil and straightening him out. The Administrator refused to pay, so Digger refused to dispose of the body. He stored Phil's remains in a community refrigerator used by locals to store their venison, there being no morgue in such a remote location. This led to complaints, which is where Nielsen came in. The Public Administrator was forced to pay the extra \$50 and Phil finally went to his rest.

Most of Nielsen's book is devoted to now obscure battles in the House of Commons. He presents his side of what happened, and how the news media distorted the story. The book is an extended attack on news reporters, and one can see why Nielsen was so bitter. In the final years of his career, he concluded that nothing could be done about the situation and so refused to talk to reporters, earning himself the nickname 'Velcro Lips'. His political career ruined his marriage; his wife suicided as an alcoholic, and Nielsen had several unhappy love affairs. I won't bore you with all the detailed accounts of the issues of the day in which Nielsen was a part of. Even for a political junkie like me, they were dull, and I skipped over many rehashes of battles won and lost in the House. I did read one interesting part about the rewiring of the House of Commons caucus chambers. In 1965, the Parliament was renovated, included installation of new translation booths in both the Tory and the Liberal caucus rooms. The electrician who wired the booths crossed some lines by mistake. The Tories discovered this the first time they used their earphones while sitting in caucus. Instead of getting a translation of their speaker between French and English, they got the Liberal caucus down the hall, live and uncensored. Naturally the Tories kept quiet about it, and for almost a year the Grits were baffled as to how the

Tories seemed to be able to anticipate every move the Liberal government made. Finally during a summer recess the Liberal caucus room was torn apart and the problem solved.

In the epilogue to Nielsen's book, he lists a number of golden rules he found practical for life in politics. He lived by some of those rules, but others he never realized until too late.

- 1) Never mistake charisma for leadership.
- 2) Conserve your energies. Don't spread yourself too thin and get involved in every single issue.
- 3) Know when to get out.
- 4) Avoid the degenerative diseases of middle age. Specifically Nielsen mentions the bottle and the nineteen year old.
- 5) Morality is not negotiable.
- 6) Have a timetable.
- 7) Always remember who sent you to the House.
- 8) To thine own self be true.
- 9) Distinguish real power from the image of power.
- 10) Benevolence and riches are rare partners.
- 11) Let the journalists do the walking. "If you are thinking of working on your family tree, do not bother to spend your money for the services of an expert. Just enter politics, and the journalists will do the job for you. If they find any skeletons, you will soon hear them rattle."
- 12) Keep your family with you. "Do not become a commuting politician; do not tolerate separation from your family. If you do, you will lose them and learn, too late, that the House is not a home."

Nielsen retired in 1987. The riding of Yukon is now 180° opposite; it is represented by the leader of the socialist NDP. For some strange reason, many ridings do that; when former Tory Prime Minister John Diefenbaker died in 1979, his riding also went NDP.

OUR TRUE NORTH STRONG AND FREE?

We are well and truly into the decline phase of the Kondratieff economic long wave, the fifty to sixty year cycle that last bottomed out in the Great Depression. Canada has zero inflation at the moment, wages are falling, and business is not good. Retail suffers the worst, with many landlords carrying their tenants rent-free because the alternative would be empty buildings. But as wages fall, so do prices, and in some ways there are benefits to the Kondratieff nadir. In Calgary, there has traditionally been only one repertoire movie theatre, the Plaza, which has been around for decades in an old building long since paid for. A few years ago, loonie theatres were introduced, which originally charged \$1 for third-run movies, the landlord taking a share in lieu of rent. (In Canada there is no \$1 banknote, instead a large gold-plated \$1 coin with a picture of a loon on it, wherefrom 'loonie'.) As first-run theatres suffer, we see more alternative use of the empty ones, which finally brings me to the Uptown, a downtown theatre despite its name. It has been converted to Calgary's second repertoire movie house and it will be an interesting experiment to see if Calgary can support two of them.

And so to the Uptown for a showing of KANADA, a short movie by Mike Hoolboom. Definitely an art film to be seen only in repertoire, as it does not hesitate to admit in the final credits: "This film paid for by the miracle of cultural agencies". KANADA cuts back and forth between four separate segments. Each segment is filmed differently, one in high-contrast B&W, another solarized, another with hand-coloured film, and the third in television format. Not too bad there but a problem with muddy sound, a problem found in a lot of films, from Hollywood epic to quickies shot in someone's barn. It would be as well for many directors and producers to spend less time talking about auteur theory and more time checking signal-to-noise ratios.

The time is the near future in an alternative Canada. A senile Jean Chrétien was ousted from the Prime Minister's office after robbing banks to help pay down the government debt and offering to trade Newfoundland for a cocaine franchise. The Liberal party, always eager for a winner, puts in Wayne Gretzky as party leader. In his acceptance speech, Gretzky said he would put Canada back where it belonged, on the cover of SPORTS ILLUSTRATED. Gretzky is bald as an egg, in a grey society where half of Canada's population is over 60, and canes are fashion status symbols.

But there is a snake in the grass, as separatists take Québec out of the Confederation, or, as their leader puts it, "The time has come to take the 'oh' out of 'Oh Canada'." Among other decrees issued by the new government of independent Québec is one banning Anne Murray music.

Meanwhile the film cuts back and forth to three other segments. The longest part of the movie is about two squabbling lesbians, one francophone and the other anglo. Their arguments go on against a muted background of jet overflights and the crump of distant artillery. War has been declared by Canada against Québec, on orders of the American President, who in turn does as he is told by the television networks. Their ratings are down, and they need a good war. They pay a bonus for a minimum daily body count of 200, etc.. The progress of the war comes via a segment with a newsreader splicing out the latest news. The newsreader wears a death mask, and the graphics flashed on the screen behind him have nothing to do with what he is talking about at the moment. (The fourth segment, a bride running about, is irrelevant to the storyline and is in the movie apparently to show off the director's ability to colourize film.) The war ends up badly for Canada; it goes bankrupt and is bought by an American TV network, which promptly changes the national anthem from 'Oh Canada' to 'There's No Business Like Show Business'.

[Review of two books by Pierre Berton: *THE INVASION OF CANADA 1812-1813* (Little, Brown & Co.) and *FLAMES ACROSS THE BORDER 1813-1814* (Penguin)]

Dale Speirs mentioned that Canadians believe that the USA teaches its citizens that they won the War of 1812. I don't know how it was taught in the last century, but in the 1930s when Juanita and I went to school, the textbooks said that neither side won. Admittedly, USA citizens are more apt to remember the victories, but aren't we all? Basically the War of 1812 is one of our forgotten wars, along with the wars against France (1798), Tripoli (1804) Mexico (1846), Korea (1873, though there was hardly enough of that one to call it a war), and Spain (1898). Of the Spanish-American War, all that the average citizen can probably remember is the slogan "Remember the Maine!". Of the War of 1812, there's probably a vague memory of the Constitution and the Guerriere and the Battle of New Orleans. Exactly which war that battle was fought in may be vague. I rather expect that the 1950s Korean War will be forgotten by the time the last of the participants die even though it's still technically going on; no peace treaty was ever signed and we're operating under an armistice.

1812 is much better known in Canada than in the USA. Its relative importance can be estimated by the fact that the *AMERICAN HERITAGE* seven-volume history of the country from colonization through WW2 gives it 22 pages. The five-volume history of Canada under the general editorship of Thomas B. Costain, covering the same period, alots the war 145 pages. One reason I wanted the Berton history was that I don't know of a comparable American history of the war. Walter Lord wrote a book about the burning of Washington. Fletcher Pratt included Jacob Brown and Richard M. Johnson in his book *ELEVEN GENERALS*. If there's much else I don't know about it. History is not a major preoccupation

with most Americans, because the introduction of most of them get to it in their textbooks is so dull. I found it via the historical novels of Kenneth Roberts. Juanita didn't discover it until we were married and she read some of the books I had accumulated. It was Fletcher Pratt's *OR-DEAL BY FIRE* that proved to her that the Civil War could be interesting; her textbooks from grade-school through university had inspired no interest at all.

Berton's two-volume history totals 872 pages, not counting notes and indexes, and is superb. Berton is not only a good historian and an interesting writer, but he has the sardonic sense of humour necessary for writing about some of the most inept military leadership in more or less recent history. For my personal enjoyment, he also provides the background for Stan Rogers' song "MacDonnell on the Heights", and mentions the little brig referred to in Rogers' "The Nancy", though he doesn't relate the specific events of the song. I like to tie in my folk-songs with real history whenever possible.

Berton makes clear the differences in attitude between Canadians and Americans during the war. (I dislike restricting the term 'American' to citizens of the USA, but Berton uses it, and other terms all seem to be awkward.) For that matter, he distinguishes among the varied Canadian feelings; there were a lot of American sympathisers in Canada during the early stages of the war, though American blunders reduced their numbers considerably during the war's course. The USA often has inferior military officers in charge at the beginning of a war. By the end, more competent officers have usually replaced them, but in the War of 1812, this happened too late, and Canadians had united against the invader. British officers, both army and navy, also had their share of incompetents, and the militia of the two countries was about equally inept, but the few British regulars present made a difference, as did the Indians. The close of the war against Napoleon and the prospect of more British army units being sent to Canada helped to get the peace talks started.

The war had two major causes, though only one was admitted by the Americans. The USA government was incensed over the British habit of impressing American seamen for its war with France. The British claimed that the sailors taken off American ships were British deserters. Probably some of them were and some weren't; in fact it's known that some weren't. The British Navy needed seamen, and military officers have never been known to be scrupulously honest in their acquisition of men. The USA had already fought France over naval harassment, and was ready to fight Britain on the same grounds. There was also, it was thought, a good chance of acquiring Canada while the British were busy elsewhere. This proved to be much harder than the American 'War Hawks' in Congress had expected.

Berton points out firmly that the war had no winner. Everything returned to the status quo because everyone was tired of fighting. But it had plenty of losers. A good share of Upper Canada (the original name of Ontario) had been marched over and burned, the militia of both sides had heavy casualties for the numbers involved, Washington, D.C., was in ashes, and both the Canadian and USA treasuries had been virtually emptied. The major losers, however, were the Indians. The western tribes fought for the British because the Americans were pushing west and taking Indian land, and the Canadians weren't. They fought very well; Tecumseh of the Shawnees is the only general on either side who comes out of Berton's analysis unscathed. It's interesting to note that some of the Senecas, who were already on reservations in USA, fought for the Americans. The differences in the approach of the two countries to the Indian question was due largely to the differences in government. Both governments preferred to keep their frontier settlers within bounds, making it easier to enforce the laws. But Canadian Governors - General didn't have to be elected and American presidents did, and were unwilling to antagonize voters by keeping their pioneers out of Indian territory. A clear Canadian victory might have meant safety, for a time at least, of In-

dian lands, but with no victory there was no hope of imposing terms on the USA.

There's one curious parallel with modern times in the War of 1812. The shipbuilding race on Lake Ontario, like the USA/Russian nuclear production, produced weapons that were never used, and whose expense impoverished everyone but the defense contractors. Some things never change.

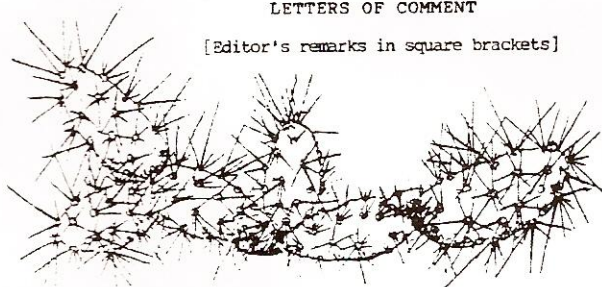
In the end, the British had their victory over Napoleon and were tired of war, especially a petty colonial war at the edge of the empire. The USA had discovered that Canada wasn't as easy to take as they'd expected. The impressment of seamen had stopped with the end of the Napoleonic war; with peace, Britain had a surplus of seamen. The avowed causes of the war weren't even mentioned in the peace treaty, and everyone except the Indians went back to making money. The Indians got the shaft.

For anyone who likes history, Berton's books will be fascinating. For those who don't, a reading of these books might prove that history is more interesting than their previous experiences have suggested.



LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



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

1994-2-20

If someone took a poll about the greatest mysteries in SF fandom, I suppose the question of why it produces fanzines like perzines but other hobby groups don't would be a high finisher. We used to think it was because SF wasn't very popular, active fans were scarce, and they needed to communicate. Obviously that situation no longer exists, and perzines seem to be gaining in popularity over conventional fanzines.

It's amazing that such an informal and unpublicized round robin zine such as SCOTS THISTLE could survive more than a century, when similar ventures in SF fandom have a tendency to break down after a year or two. (One exception is a four-member round robin which went for quarter-century or longer before its first membership change was necessitated by the death of one participant.) Back in the years when audiotape recorders were new on the market there were some round robin tape groups in existence but their longevity was even less than the written kind, partly because there was such a temptation to keep a tape

with all those voices instead of sending it along with a new section added. I'd be willing to bet that one long-gated fan has a whole stack of them in his attic, because many of the collapses could be traced to him.

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

1994-3-3

I may have to hunt up those issues of THE SAINT MYSTERY MAGAZINE with the classical true crime stories. I had run across Rabbi Yonah N. ibn Aharon before. He provided commentary on the etymology of scapegoats for Ivan Sanderson's ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN. It seems the word translated as scapegoat just might mean something like 'not quite human'.

FROM: Ned Brooks
713 Paul Street
Newport News, Virginia 23605

1994-3-1

Your mention of Rabbi Y.N. ibn Aharon rang a bell in the dim recesses of my brainpan. He has 3½ very dense pages in the third and last issue of Ivan Sanderson's JOURNAL OF THE INTERPLANETARY EXPLORATION SOCIETY for December 1961, where he appears with the honorifics 'B.D., S.T.M.'. Mostly he is explaining here what various ancient peoples thought about the stars, and quotes from Chaldean texts that seem to describe streamlined rocketships and antigravity. Was Aharon a real person and his scholarship valid? I can't tell, but there is a resemblance to the stuff that Avram Davidson wrote for his ADVENTURES IN UNHISTORY series that Owlswick collected into a book just before Davidson died.

[I checked at the University of Calgary Library but they have nothing on Aharon in their catalogue, nor could I find him listed in Jewish reference books.]

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

1994-3-2

The personal zine was a late development in SF fandom. The earliest fanzines were about SF itself, and were published generally by groups. It was later that the shift came to fanzines about fandom, and this was the anomaly. Most hobby magazines are about the hobby, not the hobbyist. Possibly it was because SF fandom in the early days was so widely scattered, getting to a club meeting wasn't always possible. Also, SF was about writing, not just necessarily collecting. Lots of fans wanted to become writers, not just accumulate SF, and the writing itself was relatively easy. It takes quite a bit of study to be able to write articles about either fish or stamps, but anyone with imagination can write an SF story; what takes effort is writing a good SF story. Teenagers with little critical judgement could easily write their own fiction, and it's no fun to just write for yourself; you want somebody else to read it. Stamp collectors wanted to collect, not write about their collections. The point was in the accumulation.

Sharyn McCrumb makes enemies with her writings about SF fandom because she's both accurate and unimpressed, and a lot of fans hate people they can't impress. Fans have had an exaggerated idea of their own importance ever since the early days.

FROM: Brian Earl Brown
11675 Beaconsfield
Detroit, Michigan 48224

1994-2-22

Goulart is actually a bit of a scholar into early American detective fiction with a couple of books broadly based on the pulps and a couple of collections of pulp detective characters. There are clear differences between

Goulart and McCrumb in the tone of their characterization of fans. For one, Goulart's characters typically feel harassed by everyone, all the time, and not just by fans at a convention. And there isn't really the sense of moral condemnation in Goulart's stories. This particular character may be insufferable without implying that all others of that group are insufferable too. Goulart has also written a fair amount of romance novels, though not under his name I believe.

FROM: Harry Andruschak
Box 5309
Torrance, California 90510-5309

1994-3-3

So Ron Goulart has written about comics cons? And Sharyn McCrumb has gone after SF cons and Highland Gatherings. I wonder who would be next? Aquarium clubs? All those grownups going gaga over a tank of fish. But wait! ... a show fish worth \$10,000 is killed, and the owner vows revenge, and the bodies start to pile up!

[Actually, you're not far wrong. I've come across a short story in the October 1984 ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE. Titled "Uncle Ushiro's Fish Story", by Nan Hamilton. It is about a prize koi (Japanese coloured carp) stolen from a koi show at Little Tokyo Village Plaza in Los Angeles. It turns out that the koi had been taken from its original owner during the WW2 internments. The owner recognized the fish's markings and took it back. (Each koi has a distinctive pattern and colouration that makes it unique, in the same way that horses and cattle can be identified by blazes or other markings.)]

Your question of perzines and fandom ... SF fans who do perzines are a very small minority in fandom nowadays. Fans may be into clubs and cons but not into publishing.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Chester Cuthbert, Henry Welch, David Barry, Tom Sadler