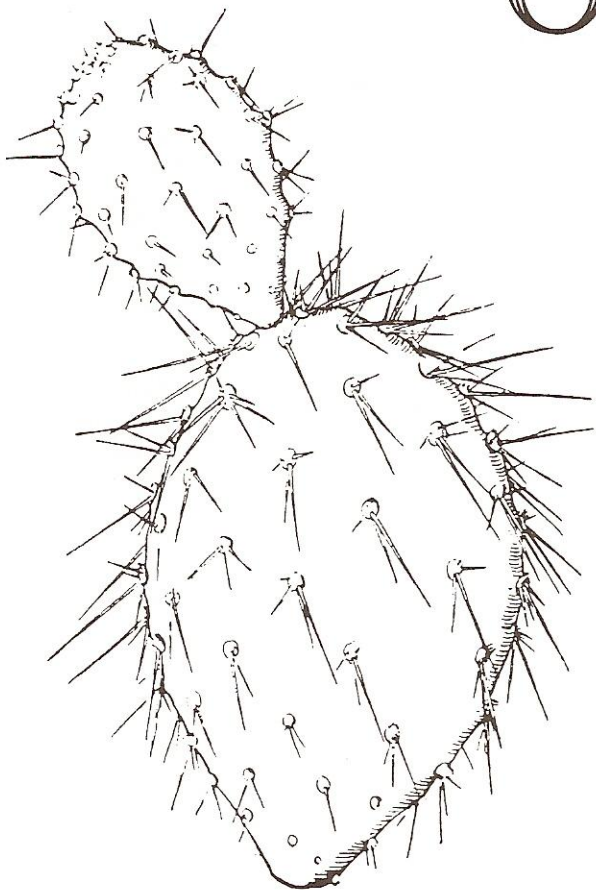


OPUNTIA

34.1



ISSN 1183-2703

OPUNTIA is published irregularly by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Available for \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy, otherwise by zine trade or letter of comment on a previous issue.

ART CREDIT: The cover depicts Opuntia tuna, by an unknown artist from the book THE CACTACEAE by N.L. Britton and J.N. Rose.

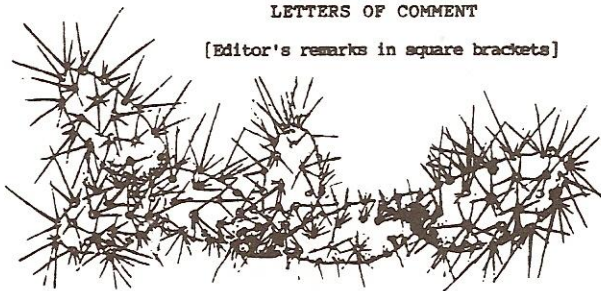
EDITORIAL: The days are getting shorter, as they do this time of year, and my opuntias growing beneath the basement windows and in the rock garden are preparing for winter by shrivelling up. They will clear out free water from their cells and produce their own antifreeze, for cold weather kills not because cells can't run in the cold but because the ice crystals puncture the cell membranes and cause the contents to leak out all over. Cold-hardy plants use the short days as a signal to send reserves down to the roots and to export water out of perennial tissues.

Not that I live in a crime-ridden neighbourhood, but opuntias planted in front of a basement window will discourage housebreakers. They don't mind prying out a window grille but prefer not to get a kneefull of spines. One problem with keeping opuntias outside is that fallen leaves are quite difficult to remove from a bed of opuntias.

I HEARD FROM: John Held Jr, Robert Lichtman, Harry Andruschak, Sheryl Birkhead, Clare Pepper, Tommy Ferguson, Malok

LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



FROM: Chester Cuthbert
Winnipeg, Manitoba

1997-6-23

I have just received a three-page personal letter from Lorna Toolis, Head Librarian of the Merrill collection in Toronto. She has not been in good health and is exhausted from overwork since the library was moved to its new quarters, but has not lost her sense of humour. John Bell, one of the compilers of the Canadian bibliography of SF and a librarian, has sent me for checking the first volume of a bibliography of Canadian contributions of SF to magazines in dates up to the demise of the pulps. He forecasts a second volume to bring the record up to date. Likely this book will be published later this year.

FROM: Randall Tin-ear
Box 3478
Hollywood, California 90078

1997-6-20

The fanzine fad is ridiculous because folks have to be told that they may be creative, much like the late 1970s when the Sex Pistols announced that it was finally permissible to play in a band rather than merely watch one. An overwhelming influx of fools will eventually find

[continued next page]

their tiny minds exhausted from the shallow effort they've produced, but as long as the third version of FACTSHEET FIVE espouses the unstated implication that any idiot can do a zine, there shall be no shortage of the aforementioned lot.

FROM: Murray Moore 1997-8-7
377 Manly Street
Midland, Ontario L4R 3E2

You reviewed RALPH #45. Did you make the connection that he is the same Ralph Alfonso who was a prominent and prodigious contributor to CANADAPA in its early mailings?

FROM: Rodney Leighton 1997-6-23
R.R. 3
Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia BOK 1VO

Hide-bound traditionalists can fume all they like but the fact is that a zine is a zine and a fanzine is a fanzine. Harry Warner states that these unwanted zines do not have their roots in a hobby. Every zine I have ever seen has been something done for fun based on the publisher's interests and likes and hobbies. Musiczines are published by people whose primary hobby is music. The people who publish wrestling zines do so because of their love of the game, because they are fans of pro wrestling and they love to write and read about what goes on in 'rasslin'. The people who write columns, contribute reports of trips to arena events, and critique major televised events all do so due to their love of the business and their love of writing about it. How is this any different from SF fans and SFfanzines? Not a bit. A great many parallels between SFandom and pro wrestling fandom. SF fanzines are produced by fans of SF but the topic is rarely mentioned. Never in some cases. Virtually every other zine I have seen is primarily all about their topic.

FROM: Buck Coulson 1997-6-17
2677 West 500 North
Hartford City, Indiana 47348

I assume rock zines have the same freedom that fanzines do, at least those that aren't trying to make a profit. Whether they use the freedom is something else; their editors may not be interested in it. Probably aren't, any more than I would be interested in publishing anything on Landowska. Promags try to publish what the readers like; fanzines publish what the editors like. How many fanzine editors publish "anything that deviates from their particular orientation"? Not many, unless a contributor the editor doesn't want to offend sends in something. Admittedly, fanzine editors seem to have broader interests than most people, but that's not quite the same thing.

I liked Sharyn McCrumb's books on fandom, although the second one was better grounded in "our" fandom than the first. Apparently she got a lot of flack over them; she vetoed a panel with me at Windycon a few years back because she thought it would just be an argument (and apologized for doing it when I told her that I'd have agreed with her in a lot of cases). There definitely are people like her characters in fandom, and always have been, although they're not in the majority. I've met quite a few of them over the years.

[I have too. I don't dispute the accuracy of McCrumb in her description of SF fans (although I wish she hadn't named one of her characters Diefenbaker; that name is meaningless outside Canada but very jarring to us Canucks). What bothers me is her attribution of motives. She condemns costuming fans for wasting their time instead of running a dress shop, as if everyone who keeps a pet dog is wasting their time because they don't open a kennel. McCrumb doesn't make a distinction between doing something for fun as a hobby and doing it as paid employment.]

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

1997-6-24

Someone told me that the story "The Fantasy People" was basically non-fiction, just Dave Ish's memories of a convention he had attended, with names changed of course. Incidentally, Ish did one of the most complete jobs of dropping out of fandom in history. Nobody seems to have heard of or from him for decades, despite the promise he showed as a burgeoning pro writer.

FROM: William Scott
Box 553
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3A3

1997-6-19

I read in a book about zines that many of the folk who produce them do not want a wide circle of readers. This is because when they widen their trapline they spend all their time mailing out copies, leaving no time to write more. One guy developed a mailing list of 8,000 subscribers and found himself spending all his time packing and stamping copies. Seems about 250 is the maximum number.

FROM: Joseph Major
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040

1997-6-17

The weakness of BETTER DEAD THAN RED is the radical rightists author Stanley Reynolds portrays are liberal's view of radical rightists, and not the latter as they are or see themselves. He seems to be correct about the disorganized nature of such groups. A book I read on them noted they seemed to be more interested in accusing each other of being secret agents of ZOG.

ZINE LISTINGS
by Dale Speirs

MIMOSA #20 (The Usual from Nicki and Richard Lynch, Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875) SF zine specializing in fanhistory; well printed with card cover. Baltimore hosts the WorldCon in 1998, so in honour of this a series begins on the history of fandom in that city. Elsewhere, various personal reminiscences, Ackerman on how FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND started publishing, Kyle on early SF conventions of 1936-38, and letters of comment. This issue has a running theme of artwork all based on a Rotsler cartoon and subsequently modified by a variety of artists.

SPACE CADET GAZETTE #7 (The Usual from R. Graeme Cameron, 1855 West 2nd Avenue, Apt. #110, Vancouver, British Columbia V6J 1J1) How could I not mention the wraparound cover art by Teddy Harvia, featuring as it does a opuntia silently infiltrating its way into a conspicuous position and a cowboy theme marred only by the fact that the cowboy is wearing a cowboy hat instead of a baseball cap. Graeme starts off with his past toastmaster speeches, at VCon 21, in which he cheerfully reminds William Gibson of all those fannish indiscretions which Bill would prefer to be forgotten now that he is a famous SF author. Also is another of Graeme's famous and hilarious reviews of bad SF movies, this one on "The Giant Claw". Other continuing series are Charles Cameron (grandfather of Graeme) on what it was like to serve in the trenches of WW1, and Graeme's tour of the Mayan homeland.

PHILOSOFY #6 (The Usual from Alexander Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78239-4022) This zine is a melange of readers' comments and editorial remarks on philosophical themes. This issue finishes up discussion on just wars and starts a new one on the ethics of governance.

SUBWAY POSTERS #2 (The Usual from George Sweetman, Box 523, Stn M, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2J2) Reviewzine of mostly punk and skateboard zines, but also a useful listing of Calgary zines. Not too much duplication with other reviewzines and thus a good resource about a scene that doesn't get that much publicity. The article of interest in this issue is a behind the scenes look at the first Calgary Zine Fair, which was a bit of a disaster. Okay, more than a bit. "But I thought you booked the hall!" as the crowd milled around the building waiting to get in. It seems that while I was handing out zines in front of the hall, George just about got himself killed falling off the stairs out back. But finally someone got the key and paid the rental, and next time there will be a bit of organization if George has anything to say about it. But I hope there will be future zine fairs in Calgary, and more power to George's arm.

APPARATCHIK #80 (The Usual from Andy Hooper, 4228 Francis Avenue, #103, Seattle, Washington 98103) This is the final issue, as the zine is being closed down partly from internal dissention of the editorial collective and partly from overwork, not surprising for a tri-weekly zine. SF convention reports, the TAFF fund, fanhistory, letters, and zine reviews.

BARBED WIRE #10.5 (The Usual from William Scott, Box 553, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3A3) For those who complain about OPUNTIA's numbering system, this zine uses one just as logical. Whole numbers are political rants and published in the usual ascending order. .5 issues are fiction and published in the opposite direction, thusly 10.5, 9.5, and so forth. Some nice reading; I chose this particular issue to mention because it tells a story about an auction mart veterinarian whose examination of a sickly bull goes awry. (My father was a vet who also did such examinations, although never with such results.)

ON SPEC #29 (\$6 from On Spec, Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G6) Canada's SF digest. Always good art but the stories tend to range wildly from bad (and historically distorted) western fantasy to a rather disturbing story about people who really, really love their work.

PROBE #102 (The Usual from Science Fiction South Africa, Box 781401, Sandton 2146, South Africa) Nice clubzine in digest size with card cover. More fiction than most SF zines carry, the usual letters and reviews, and an account of the state of SF in Zimbabwe and Malawi.

FILE 770 #117 (US\$8 for five issues from Mike Glycer, Box 1056, Sierra Madre, California 91025) Newszine of SF fandom, with obituaries, capsule comments, letters, and convention reports. The highlight is the report about the Disclave con, which was disrupted when some bondage fans got a little carried away in their hotel room and tried to suspend one of them from a ceiling sprinkler. Not surprisingly the sprinkler pipe gave way, flooding the hotel and causing about \$100,000 damage.

FOSFAX #186 (The Usual from Falls of the Ohio SF and Fantasy Association, Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233) Not a zine to skim through; 72 pages of microprint on SF books, Sherlock Holmes, American politics, Heinlein, and 36 pages of letters. Frustrated because I always wafh you in OPUNTIA? Get this zine and you'll have plenty of room to expound your ideas.

RELUCTANT FAMULUS #48 (The Usual from Tom Sadler, 422 West Maple Avenue, Adrian, Michigan 49221-1627) Genzine with convention reports, war stories, travel, reviews, and a letter column where the editor replies at length to each loccer.

FOR THE CLERISY #21 (The Usual from Brant Kresovich, Box 404, Getzville, New York 14068-0404) Life as an American expatriate, and advice on how to survive them furriners.

THE JEZAIL #1 (The Usual from Andy Hooper, 4228 Francis Avenue North, #103, Seattle, Washington 98103) It bears a startling resemblance to a recently deceased frequent fanzine, but of course ... News of SF fandom, Christina Lake back home in England and seeing it in a new way, con reports, and zine reviews.

THE INCISORS REPORT #1 (Available as part of support for Toronto in '03, Box 3, Stn A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1A2. Cost of membership is C\$20.03/US\$15) This is the first progress report from the committee who are bidding to get Toronto the World SF Convention in 2003. Mike Glicksohn writes an account of the two previous Toronto WorldCons in 1948 and 1973. Elsewhere are news and notes about how the bid is going and what is being done by committee members.

AMUSING YOURSELF TO DEATH #5 (US\$2 or arranged zine trade from Ruel Gaviola, Box 91934, Santa Barbara, California 93190-1934) Reviewzine with news of zine fairs and other events, zine listings, and an interview with Neil Postman.

PLOKTA #7 (The Usual from Alison Scott, 42 Tower Hamlets Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4RH, England) A jolly good SF zine, with con reports (and nice photos) and locs. A behind-the-scenes tour of Parliament by a prospective mandarin.

PROPER BOSKONIAN #41 (The Usual from New England SF Association, Box 809, Framingham, Massachusetts 01701) Clubzine with good solid content, not just local ephemeral chatter of no interest to outlanders. The bulk of this issue is Evelyn Leeper's report on the SF convention Boskone 34. She takes a laptop to the panels and can thus file detailed reports on what was said. Also an installment of Ian Gunn's "Space-Time Buccaneers", the best comic strip going.

ETHEL THE AARDVARK #73 (The Usual from Melbourne SF Club, Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne 3005, Australia) Clubzine with news and notes of Australian fandom. This issue has a survey on women in SF: at a club meeting men and women were polled on their preferences for various female SF characters. For both genders, Susan Ivanova, Ripley, and Dana Scully ranked in the top three of most liked. The "Unpopular" category was quite different; for some reason the menfolk disliked Captain Janeway and the women disliked Wonder Woman, although both agreed on Sister Bettrill (The Flying Nun).

ATTITUDE #11 (The Usual from Michael Abbott, 102 William Smith Close, Cambridge CB1 3QF, England) An editorial collective who put on an SF convention as an extension of the fanzine. Much of this issue is therefore taken up by con reports, but also various personal essays, locs, and musings. 70 pages of reading on British fandom.

OBSCURE #40 (US\$1 or zine trade from Jim Romenesko, 45 Albert Street South, #1, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105) In this issue a look at the surge in books about zines as mainstream publishers discover it, with a round-table discussion by zine publishers on whether or not it is a bad thing to sell out, grab the book money, and run with it. Also zine fair reports and the perennial topic of FACTSHEET FIVE bashing. I'm sure Seth Friedman knows exactly how Bill Gates feels.

SQUIGGLEDY HOY #1 (The Usual from Bridget Hardcastle, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX, England) Perzine on British SF fandom, sparked by a night when she saw the Mir space station moving across the sky. Chat on personal life, a convention she worked on, theft of a fried egg, and libraries with pickled books.

WARP #42 (The Usual from Montréal SF&F Association, Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montréal, Quebec H2W 2P4) Clubzine of media SF fans, with news of local fandom and notes on STAR WARS et al.

SQUIB #1 (The Usual from Victor Gonzalez, 905 NE 45th Street, #106, Seattle, Washington 98105) Perzine from a co-editor of APPARATCHIK, bears a startling resemblance, etcetera. Victor introduces himself to fans in general and Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund voters in particular. Others from the editorial staff of a recently deceased frequent fanzine discuss baseball superstitions and why old folks like classical music.

SHOOTING STARS #1 (The Usual from Mike Siddall, 133 Duke Street, Askam-In-Furness, Cumbria LA16 7AE, England) Thoughts on fan art, STARSHIP TOOPERS, putting on a game show parody at a convention, disaster novels considered as racism (kill them all and let God sort them out), and fanzine musings.

GLOBAL MAIL (US\$3 from Global Mail, Grove City Factory Stores, Box 1309, Grove City, Pennsylvania 16127) Mail art, zines, boycotts and political causes. This is a requestzine, with pages of microprint classifieds from zine editors wanting articles and artwork, mail artist requests for participation in their projects, and those seeking supporters for their cause. I find this zine much better than FACTSHEET FIVE for plugging into the Papernet; if you feel left out of the action, get a copy and start participating.

CHIMNEYVILLE ALMANAC #7 (The Usual from Johnny Lowe, 1152 West 24th Street, #1, San Pedro, California 907-31) Articles on television Superman, the movie 2001 and the book sequels, unique style of zine reviews (he shows the covers), and locs.

GOTH, SHMOTH #5 (The Usual from Paul Olson, Box 3472, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403) Shapeshifter fiction, a delightful illustrated version of "Lydia, The Tattooed Lady" sung by Groucho Marx, and zine reviews.

STOVEPIPE #9 (The Usual from Troy Teegarden, Box 1076, Georgetown, Kentucky 40324) Fiction and poetry.

BIBLIOZINE #56 (The Usual from John Held Jr, Box 410837, San Francisco, California 94141) A single-sheet mailart zine that is a bibliography of obscure works in that field, with annotations and summaries. Useful reference work.

SOUTHERN FANDOM CONFEDERATION BULLETIN V6#9 (The Usual from Tom Feller, Box 68203, Nashville, Tennessee 37206-8203) Newsletter of and for SF clubs in southern USA. Lists of clubs and fanzines, con reports, locs, and other useful information.

THYME #116/AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS #76 (The Usual from Alan Stewart, Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia) Two zines in one, with all kinds of information on Australian SF, from news and notes to book reviews to con listings.

MOSHASSUCK REVIEW, August 1997 (Zine trade from Ken Faig Jr, 2311 Swainwood Drive, Glenview, Illinois 60025-2741) An apazine for Lovecraft fans, but not always directly about him. This issue discusses zine publishers of the early 1900s, particularly the Blue Pencil Club and George Julian Houtain. It would do the FACTSHEET FIVE crowd good to have this article reprinted in some other zines, as a reminder that young people published zines a century ago and had just as much fun doing them as we do today.

KNARLEY KNEWS #64 (The Usual from Henry Welch, 1525 - 16 Avenue, Grafton, Wisconsin 53024-2017) Other proud fathers show off baby pictures; this zine's cover shows the chromosomes of newborn Kira's lab tests. Most of the issue is locs and an extended account of a bicycle tour across Australia.

MORIARITY'S REVENGE (The Usual from Dave Hicks, 1 Saint Woolos Place, Newport, South Wales, NP9 4GQ, Wales) Dave isn't too worried about bureaucrats changing safety regulations; he is in the sign business and sells a fresh batch every time a new ISO standard is introduced.

ERG #138 (Trade or letter to Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5RQ, England) This is the Antiques Road Show of zinedom. I don't mean that as an insult; this zine covers early British SF zines and comics. The feature article in this issue is about the twopenny weeklies for boys. Also notes on bookshops, Turing Test crosswords, and experimental aircraft.

GASWORKS #1 (The Usual from John D. Berry, 525 - 19th Avenue East, Seattle, Washington 98103) Yankees Down Under and Across The Pond, being two trip reports to Australia and England. Thoughts on UFO conspiracies, and how they are based on bad SF movies and books.

QUIPU #7 (The Usual from Vicki Rosenzweig, 33 Indian Road, 6-R, New York, New York 10034) Perzine, with accounts of getting a tattoo, a tour of Hong Kong and locs.

OUTWORLDS #67 (The Usual from Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238-4503) After five years since the last issue, this zine returns with various personal stories on life in and out of SF fandom.

FROZEN HYPNOSIS #26 (The Usual from Malok, Box 41, Waukau, Wisconsin 54980) Mail art zine of photocopy collages. The theme of this issue is life after death from the shut-it-out stage to the nowhere dream.

'UKULELE #5 (The Usual from Daniel Farr, 77 Maitland Place, #106, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2V6) A recently revived zine, so mostly a look back in this issue, for that time capsule feeling, contrasted with a view on Web publishing.

RALPH #46 (The Usual from Ralph Alfonso, Box 505, 1288 Broughton Street, Vancouver, British Columbia V6G 2B5) A jazz and poetry zine for the Vancouver café crowd.

TABLOID TRASH #7 (The Usual from Rusty Clark, 24 Glenview Drive, West Springfield, Massachusetts 01089) Mail art zine specializing in rubber stamp carving. This zine is a portfolio of readers' work and Rusty's. I couldn't help but wonder why hand-carved rubber stamps remind me of lino cuts, but I've figured it out; they have no shades, only solid blocks of black (or colour) and lines. Is there no method of easy stippling or the equivalent of silkscreen in hand carving one's own rubber stamps?

CENTERRIFICAL TALES #3 (The Usual from Kevin Welch, Box 2195, Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2195) Jackie Gleason, baseball fandom, Heinlein, book and movie reviews.

ROGUE RAVEN #50 (The Usual from Frank Denton, 14654 - 8 Avenue SW, Seattle, Washington 98166-1953) Rose-growing for the geriatric crowd, but I shouldn't make fun as I get these twinges and aches myself as I get older. Also a trip report about the English moors, a tour of western USA, and Cthulhu for the beginner.

DRIFT #90 (The Usual from C.F. Kennedy, Box 40, 90 Shuter Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K6) Fiction and poetry, along with articles by Canuck zine publishers on why they publish, and an introduction to mail art.

CONTRACT V9#4 (The Usual from John Mansfield, 321 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B9) Canada's SF newszine, with con reports and listings, articles on how to run them, and thoughts on why some ain't what they used to be.

AUREALIS #17 (AUS\$7.95 from Chimaera Publications, Box 2164, Mount Waverly, Victoria 3149, Australia. Visa and Mastercard accepted.) This is quite similar to ON SPEC in physical format and style of fiction. What I liked best though was Stephen Higgins' continuing series of reviews of famous SF books written as if by a critic with no knowledge of the field: "FOUNDATION ... is like Jane Austen on an intergalactic scale."

ANGRY THOREAUAN #19 (US\$5 or zine trade from Randall Tin-ear, Box 3478, Hollywood, California 90078) Music reviewzine with slick colour cover and lots of record and zine reviews. Where it parts company from dozens of similar zines is in the editorial content. Common sense rants on why buying albums from independent labels does not entitle one to consider oneself as part of The Revolution. A fascinating eyewitness account of a rocket launch from Cape Canaveral. The author has been watching rockets lift off since 1956, and in this article remarks that the explosion of a Delta-11 a few seconds after liftoff "has utterly ruined any appreciation by me for Fourth of July fireworks". The photos of this January 1997 detonation, taken from 4 miles away, are most impressive. Elsewhere, a continuing series on phone sex operators, written not by some fan boy but by the operators themselves, giving their point of view. Solid articles, albeit tinged by a bit too much ranting, make this zine well recommended by me.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE #51 (The Usual from Jean Weber, Box 744, Ryde, New South Wales 2112, Australia) This perzine starts off with a trip by 4WD to the northern tip of Australia, then about the editor's laser surgery for her eyes, peanut allergies, and finally locs.

CHALLENGER #6 (The Usual from Guy Lillian, Box 53092, New Orleans, Louisiana 70153-3092) Heavyweight genzine running to 90 pages plus numerous well-scanned photos. Speech on why NASA needs a vision for the future, an account by Harry Warner Jr on a fanzine he did from 1938 to 1942 (required reading for those who think the zine story begins circa 1970s), personal accounts by various folk, the Mardi Gras festival, a trip to post-Soviet Russia (avoid flying on their airlines if at all possible!), zine reviews, and letters.

TAIL SPINS #29 (US\$5 or zine trade from Tail Spins, Box 1860, Evanston, Illinois 60204) Music reviewzine with lots of record and zine reviews and slick colour cover. Experiments on humans, blaxploitation movies, and an English stalker who followed her boyfriend Stateside.

MESHUGGAH #14 (US\$2 from Simeon Stylites, 200 East 10th Street, #603, New York, New York 10003-7702) Genzine of personal accounts, essays, and fiction. Far better writing than one usually expects from zines of this sort. A wide range of topics and story ideas. I read this from cover to cover and consider that many of the items would be better than the ones in prozines. Some of it is the usual mix found in many zines, such as wage slave whines and modest-proposal stories, but others particularly are notable. I liked the alternative-history obituary of Trotsky, who went into film-making instead of the other thing, siding with the menshevik (silent movies) faction against Ulyanov's bolshevik (talkies) faction.

THE FOSSIL #299 (US\$15 from The Fossils Inc., c/o Martha Shivers, 1613 West Jackson Street, Knoxville, Iowa 50138) Newsletter for apa zinesters interested in the history of amateur press associations. News and notes of the group's business, plus extracts reprinted from a 1931 newzine published in Alaska by schoolboys. In the absence of any regular newspaper for the interior, they were soon past 87 subscribers. The Fossils also maintain a zine library, which has volumes of zines back to 1854.

RACE TRAITOR #7 (US\$6 from The New Abolitionists, Box 603, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140-0005) Subtitled "Treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity", being a perfect-bound card-cover digest devoted to eliminating racism not by the usual method of raising up discriminated groups to equality, but by abolishing the privileges for the whites. Articles include an interesting essay on the origin of colour racism in the 1600s. Prior to that era, the great divide was religion, not skin.

IT GOES ON THE SHELF #18 (The Usual from Ned Brooks, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, Virginia 23605) Reviewzine of older and obscure books, the stuff you can only find in secondhand bookstores and mail-order dealers.

An apa, or amateur press association, is a method of distributing zines whereby members send in x number of copies of their zine to a Central Mailer or Official Editor, who then collates the zines into bundles and mails one out to each member. Apa members pay a fee to cover postage for the bundles, and some apas may also do the zine photocopying for an additional cost. Apas originated in the 1800s and are still an easy way to distribute trades.

FANTASY A.P.A. #240 (US\$15 plus 8 pages activity plus SF fanzine credentials. Details from Robert Lichtman at Box 30, Glen Ellen, California 95442) This SF apa is celebrating its 60th year; the bundle at hand has 34 zines totalling 390 pages. Issued quarterly, and while you need certain SFish credentials, your zine does not actually have to discuss the stuff, although it would be nice. The minimum number of copies you must contribute is 68. There is a limit of 65 members in the apa (the extra copies are for missing or sale bundles). At the moment there are five vacancies, so if you hustle a letter to Mr. Lichtman, you should be able to get in. This is one of the oldest and most prestigious apas.

FAN HISTORY A.P.A. #3 (US\$15, no activity required, send one copy to be reproduced in a uniform format in this apa. Details from Nigel Rowe, 5224 North Glenwood, #3, Chicago, Illinois 60640) This apa specializes in SF fanhistory, and is part of an effort to collect and co-ordinate information and artifacts on the history of SF fandom. Some of the zines in this apa focus on the organizational details of the task, while others are publishing historical data about the SF hobby. If you want to learn more about the hobby, this is a good place to start.

I've been getting a few calls to participate in mail art projects, and will pass them on here for others who might be interested. All listings are in the words of those calling for entries, and no warranty is implied by me. I am only listing the ones with deadlines still open when this issue is printed. Anyone who wants to send project listings should allow about six months lead time. No e-mail or WWW addresses will be listed, only Papernet addresses.

SCHOOLDAYS (Govinda Van Maele, 5 Um bierg L-6665 Herbron, Luxembourg) Send anything related to school in your country or about your own schooltime. Any size, any medium. No jury and no return. Deadline is October 15, 1997. Documentation catalogue to all participants early 1998. Exhibition in June 1998 in the Waldorfschool in Luxembourg.

COLLECTION ART TERRE (Diane Bertrand, 9109 Deschambault, Saint-Léonard, Québec H1R 2C6) From a book, one page left, torn and fly away around the world ... Send a PEACE of paper. Ongoing recycle art and poetry project. Non-stop art waves. D'un livre défait, étranger de ma connaissance, s'il ne reste plus que cette page déchirée, qu'elle s'envole autour du monde ... Projet de transformation et d'échange, au hasard des jours, de bouts de papier, de lettres et de cartes postales. Des vagues à l'art.

ARTIST TRADING CARDS (The New Gallery, 516 - 9th Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 1P9) Produce your own cards on 64 mm x 89 mm cardstock (standard hockey trading card size); must be sleeved in plastic trading card sleeves. Cards are signed on back of card by artist and dated and numbered. Painting, rubberstamp, collage, etcetera. For trade by mail or in person last Saturday of month 17h00.

PRESS HARD, YOU ARE MAKING FOUR COPIES

Franz Kafka is the patron saint of government workers. He is of a few writers to have his name enter the English language as an adjective. His characters are lost in welters of unspecified charges (THE TRIAL) or an endless maze of applications for actions from civil servants who see no need to be either civil or to serve (THE CASTLE). It is the universal nature of bureaucracy that has made Kafka an author for posterity, for all of us can relate to the frustrations of officialdom. None of us have been turned into cockroaches but we've all stood in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles, or argued an incorrect monthly statement with a bank teller.

Kafka's novel THE CASTLE is available as an edition of the Everyman's Library from Knopf from the chain book stores, or various older editions if you can find them in secondhand stores. It is the story of K., who has been appointed as Land Surveyor by the lord of the Castle. K. arrives in the village at the foot of the Castle to take up his position, but finds no one is expecting him or wanting him. To approach the Castle directly is impossible without the help of the senior mandarins, who in turn must be approached through the minor civil servants, who in turn ... And so an endless regression appears, and K. never struggles his way out of the village. His arrival upsets villagers who are used to proper process and fear the wrath of the castellans. He blithely and innocently barges his way through the village, doing himself more harm than good, and unable to understand why he should be having so much difficulty.

Kafka does not make the Castle's servitors as evil men doing evil because that's the cardboard they are cut out of. They all have their reasons for what they do, and as K. corners them one by one, they explain to him their viewpoint. This is something I can relate to, for as a government worker myself, I often put people

in the same position as K., explaining why we can't plant a tree on their boulevard, or why we mow a freeway more often than their neighbourhood park. We take abuse from taxpayers for policies we have no control over but must enforce while our masters are secluded in their inner sanctums. Fear of abuse leads to avoidance reaction. I immediately recognized as part of daily life at work the scene in THE CASTLE where K. stands in a corridor while the civil servants resolutely refuse to open their doors for fear that he might want to talk to one of them. Life in the civil service is measured by files opened and closed, then neatly indexed and forgotten. It is a bold bureaucrat who actively welcomes the attention of The Castle, just as we prefer the managers to stay in their offices. K. does not seem to understand this, and suffers as a result.

THE CASTLE would make a good soap opera mini-series. It suffers from talkiness, where characters analyze the smallest of details in the greatest of detail. People speculate at great length on trivialities. Kafka could have used some blue-pencilling, although if the excess was left in, it would make a leisurely television series and nice period piece.

The long introspective patches of speculation do serve to highlight the periods of action, when K. sallies out to meet the enemy, that is, the castellans. One bureaucrat laments the state of his files and his overwork. K. is plagued by two assistants granted to him to help in his land surveying, but as he has no instructions about what to survey, the assistants are millstones around his neck. Some civil servants only grant interviews in the small hours of the morning. K. waits by the coach of a castellan in an effort to waylay him and get a definite answer; the worthy civil servant decides not to travel.

There is no optimistic ending a la Hollywood, and this novel ends without closure. Mainly, of course, because Kafka never finished it, but he did leave notes that K. never would have succeeded in reaching The Castle.

THE REVELATIONS OF ST. HUGO THE FANNISH

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea. And I, Hugo, saw the holy city Toronto in 2003 coming down from WorldCon, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying:

Behold, Toronto in 2003 is with men and will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and Roscoe himself shall be with them and be their God. And Roscoe shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more gafia, nor fan feuds, nor BOFs, neither shall there be any more hekto, for the former things are passed away.

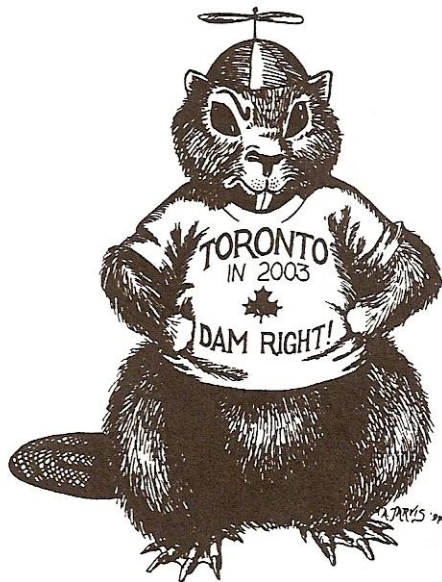
And he that sat upon the throne said:

Behold, I make all things new.

And he said unto me:

Write, for these words are true and faithful. Come hither; I will show thee WorldCon, Toronto in 2003.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city Toronto in 2003 descending out of heaven from WorldCon, having the glory of Roscoe. And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Roscoe. On the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of Roscoe.



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