

CLARITAS #6.152 was a one-shot parody of OPUNTIA inspired by another zine, FOSFAX.

CLARITAS was a single-sheet with four pages, plus a one-sided half-sheet (= one page) as a loose insert. It was published immediately after OPUNTIA #23.1B. The insert explains the reason for issuing CLARITAS.

For context, the remarks about Pentium chips are in reference to the then scandal about Pentium computer chips incorrectly rounding off numbers when doing calculations.

April, 1995

Algeon Whateley (S.U.P: £13.99)

these ancient writings are the *litterae* Al. Associates of the Emperor, well-others wanting to be well-regarded Emperor, who would include them along the entire readership could be enlightened Emperor and one or two of his close associates. Imperial system against advocates of extravagant assertions as *liberales*.

entered on the desirability of sending on a five-year mission to explore this new life and new civilizations, to bold-before. This staff of this expedition two, a seeress skilled at looking deep-into hearts, a blind Nubian skilled in the artifice of a talking statue.

the section of *litterae adnotati* was *Momites of Colonia Ageri*". He was called the Imperial collation sessions, where they were assembled from stacks of the separate corps of scribes. Nevertheless, he fruitful career of writing such epistles.

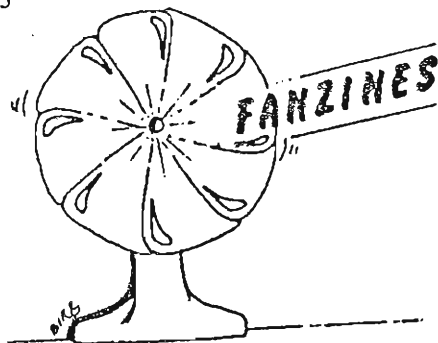
er to the LAI was Darrelus Helveticus, and the tale-tellers and an expert on also seems to have some reputation, (er in books). His detailed description Emperor's fondness for travel tales is anyone wishing to understand the scene to have engaged in frequent disputes, Codorus Albinus of Alexandria.

the established literary world of such asarians of literature, this trove has established on the Imperial literature.

rales was Ferru lana, a bitter comment-establishment of a corps of Amazons, nents for rapists, and the establishment *es Ingenuae* to encourage creators of

April, 1995

Phosgene 1



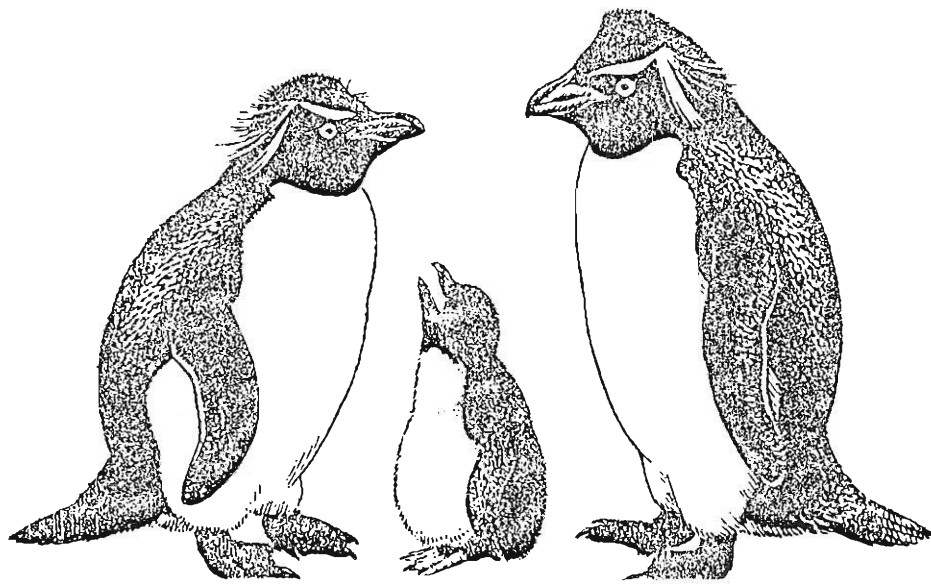
Claritas 6.152 by Glen Steeples; Box 666, Kashechewan, Ontario, Canada. (Note: Numbering is approximate because Glen has been using his Pentium™ chip to do the numbering) The premiere science fiction commentary introduces a new sub-numbering, this time to handle musings about Canadian constitutional law on penguin game protection laws.

The American zine FOSFAX (Louisville, Kentucky) did a parody of itself called Phosgene. The zine reviews were of real zines parodied. Opuntia was parodied as Claritas, editor Dale Speirs as Glen Steeples (Dale = Glen, Speirs pronounced 'spires' = steeples). Dale Speirs decided to create a real Claritas to match the parody review.

Except for the paragraph about the penguins, everything in Claritas is for real.

CLARITAS

6.152



CLARITAS is published by Glen Steeples, Box 666, Kashechewan, Ontario, Canada. Not available for The Usual.

WHY THIS ISSUE IS LATE: My Smith-Corona computer has a Pentium chip to do the numbering. Try as I might, the damn thing won't print the heading properly, which is why this issue is numbered 6.152, even though it is the next one after issue 4.999.

EDITORIAL: The three most popular sports in Canada are hockey, curling, and constitutional reform. Catholic theologians may debate how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, but a Canadian theologian would first instinctively try to settle the question of whether the pin is a federal or provincial responsibility. When an American president is faced with domestic problems he can't handle, he distracts public opinion by invading a small country unable to withstand American military might. When a Canadian prime minister is faced with domestic problems he can't handle, he distracts public opinion by proposing a new constitutional accord. (We can't invade a small country because we might lose, our armed forces having enough trouble containing aboriginals on their Reserves.)

Other countries have stirring openings to their constitutions. The ages preserve declarations such as "We hold these truths to be self-evident". Canada's 1982 constitution begins with those deathless words "That, whereas in the past certain amendments to the Constitution of Canada have been made ...".

Of the many different constitutions Canada has had, the one to survive longest was the British North America Act of 1867, amalgamating several quarrelsome Dominions and colonies. This confederation was motivated not so much by brotherly love and the belief that in unity there is strength, as it was by fear of American manifest destiny and the impatience of Britain, fed up with spending money on the fractious colonies. The BNA Act was passed by British Parliament and could only be amended by them, putting Canada in the peculiar position of being unable to amend its own constitution. Not that it really mattered, since only lip service was ever paid to the BNA Act. That Act clearly specifies that Canada was to be ruled by a Governor General (in right of the Crown) and each province by a Lieutenant Governor. Nowhere in the BNA Act is there any mention of a Prime Minister or provincial Premier.

The 1982 Constitution is not actually a freestanding constitution but rather is a series of amendments to the BNA Act. The latter was patriated to Canada, giving us the right, as of 1982, to amend our own constitution. Patriated, not repatriated. Since the BNA Act hadn't been here it obviously could not be repatriated.

All well and good, except for Québec. Since the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, Québec had informal status as a "distinct society". This gave it special privileges in language and culture, such as using the Napoleonic Code instead of English common law. (English, not British. The Scots have their own common law.) As long as Québec's distinct society status was informal, other provinces didn't mind. It was only when Québec demanded these privileges be formalized in any new constitution that all the shouting started. Other provinces felt that their cultures were equally as distinct. Compare Alberta with Ontario, for example. Either all should have distinct society status or none. Québec therefore did not agree to the 1982 Constitution, leading to much hard feeling on both sides.

Subsequently, two attempts were made to amend the 1982 Constitution and bring Québec into the fold. In Canada, a constitutional amendment is called an accord; they are named after the places where they were negotiated. Alas, both the Meech Lake Accord and the Charlottetown Accord were defeated, the first in votes at provincial legislatures, the second by national referendum.

There are those who ask what about the constitution in relation to the game laws respecting penguins. To which I reply, "Well, what of it?". This is clearly an attempt to distract attention away from the issue of making the Senate elective instead of appointive. Penguins are not discussed in Canadian law, game or otherwise, because the birds are not native to Canada. Even if they were introduced, they could not long survive due to the presence of predators such as polar bears, Arctic foxes, and Inuit.

THE FIRST THING WE DO, LET'S KILL ALL THE REPORTERS
by Coulee Sentinel

In Alberta, Premier Ralph Klein has led a revolution in of budget cutting. Pushed by Blue Tories in the backbenches as much as leading them, he has made 20% cuts in the budget while freezing taxes, already the lowest in Canada and lower than many American states. There is no provincial sales tax and the personal income tax rate is about 13%.

The cuts have triggered off the usual NIMBY crowd, all of them saying "Cut somebody else's programme, ours is more important", and trotting out the anecdotes about the catastrophic consequences. Some of this may be true, for when billions are slashed at a time, innocent people can suffer. But most of it is playing to the crowd. One good example is what happened when hospitals were closed.

Alberta was overbuilt with hospitals as a result of poli-

tical patronage. Using Calgary as a specific example, it had six hospitals (four public, two private), each with their own administration and collectively between them running at 60% capacity. The Tories shut down two buildings and moved the staff to the other hospital buildings. The administrators were merged into one regional hospital board that took in not only Calgary but surrounding rural areas. Massive numbers of management deadwood were laid off.

How did the news media report it? For one thing, always as "HOSPITALS CLOSED", giving careless readers the idea that patients were being turned out into the street. In actual fact, only the buildings were closed. Patients were simply moved to another hospital building to bring that building up to capacity.

Most of the managers were put out into the streets, but the nursing supervisors still had seniority bumping rights in the nurses' union. They therefore took demotions and knocked out less senior nurses on the front lines. Again, that is not how the news media reported it. "NURSES LAID OFF", with a picture of a tearful young nurse cuddling a baby in the maternity ward. One gets the impression that the mother and child will be left to fend for themselves. The truth was that a senior nurse, previously a paper shuffler, will take over and go back to the drudgery of emptying bedpans.

Hospital programmes continued, but without the baggage of management. Empire-builders were the only ones to suffer. In rural areas, hospitals that should never have been built were converted to old-folks homes or longterm care. Eckville, population 900, had a hospital with only a few beds ever used, to take an example. Nevermind that the famous author Dale Speirs was born in that building in 1955 (second floor, end room of the west wing), there was no justification to keep it open as a hospital.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Ravine Watchman

This time around I want to look at some books by the Bard of Eckville himself, Dale Speirs. (Prices are in Canadian dollars to Canadian addresses, USA dollars for the rest of the world.)

HISTORY OF THE CALGARY PHILATELIC SOCIETY (\$4 payable to Calgary Philatelic Society, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7) This 1992 tome covers the history of organized philately in Calgary from the founding of the CPS in 1922 by Dr. E.G. Mason. Written mostly in chronological order, with some appendices by subject, it is a straightforward reportorial account of the club. Tends to be dry in places, but as the author says in the foreword, the book is intended to preserve history so that if the original documents are lost, then at least the basic facts remain. This is a story of slow and steady progress. No great schisms or controversies, save perhaps the proposal to ban smoking in meetings. (Passed, with dissention.) A useful book for those interested in philatelic history. Inconspicuous will find a few pages of text will help them go to sleep.

HISTORY OF THE AQUARIUM HOBBY IN CALGARY, ALBERTA (\$5 payable to Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7) Hot off the presses in May 1995, this book blows the lid off scandal and outrage that Calgary aquarists would prefer forgotten. The formative years of the 1930s and 1940s were relatively quiet. It was the formation of the Buyers' Committee in 1959 that was to take the Calgary Aquarium Society to the brink and over. Competing with established pet store dealers, the Committee was able to import fish and equipment and sell at a fraction over wholesale to its members, since it had no labour costs. A club with about twenty members prior to 1959, the CAS had more than 700 members by 1972, making it the largest local aquarium club in the world, with its own store. But that

didn't help it get enough volunteers to run the store. It collapsed in 1972, and by 1995 had only struggled back up to 100 members.

While all the shouting was going on in the Committee, the others in the club got on with their daily routines. The CAS was formally organized in 1951, and seems likely to make 2001, still serving the Calgary aquarist.

This book is organized more by topic than a strict chronological account. Speirs seems to have learned from his earlier opus that this makes life easier for the reader, who does not have to keep track of dozens of people and events simultaneously, like some Russian novel.

CALGARY PHILATELIST (Published five times annually by the Calgary Philatelic Society. Membership is \$12 per year, plus a one-time initiation fee of \$5, from the CPS, Box 1478, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2L6) Edited by Dale Speirs, this is more than just club news and a calendar of events. Much substance in the way of articles about the postal history of Calgary and other Alberta towns. A wide variety of contributors; Speirs is notorious for constantly hitting up philatelic friends for articles, to the point that some people turn and flee the room if they see him. In the April 1995 issue, part of a continuing series on Calgary postmarks by Perry Hollinshead leads off. Mirko Zatka discusses varieties on modern Canada stamps, and Jim Karr reports on the Lacombe post office fire that put it temporarily out of business. There is a summary of long servers in stamp clubs. Current record holders are Vernon Bressler (69 consecutive years as a member of the Capital City P.S., Pittsburg, Pennsylvania), Sid Richardson (66 years with Calgary P.S.), and A.S. Mackie (63 years with Aberdeen & North of Scotland P.S.).