

OPUNTIA

28.1B



O! PUNTIA!
OUR ROAMIN' NATIVE PLANT!
TRUE PRICKLY PEAR,
LET ALL THY SONS NOW CHANT!
WITH GROWING PARTS,
WE SEE THEE RISE,
GREEN CACTI STRONG AND FREE!
O! PUNTIA!
WE STAND ENBARBED FOR THEE!
O! PUNTIA!
WE STAND ENBARBED FOR THEE!

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COVER ART: Canada's national anthem has at least five versions, probably more, of the lyrics. The latest revision is courtesy of Ian Gunn, Box 567, Blackburn 3130, Australia. G'day, eh?

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS has arrived from Tesseract Books, 214 - 21 - 10405 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3S2, for their autumn 1997 anthology TESSERACTS 6. The anthology is open to Canadian writers, accepts short fiction and poems in either language, and closes August 15, 1996. Details on entering stories can be had by sending an SASE to the above address. Editing the anthology this time around are Carolyn Clink and her husband Robert J. Sawyer.

LATE NEWS: As we go to press (or photocopier, rather) we learn that Linda Ross-Mansfield has announced the 1996 Canadian Unity Fan Fund winner is Rene Walling of Montréal. He will attend Convention in Calgary.

ZINE LISTINGS

by Dale Speirs

PROBE #99 (The Usual from SFSA, Box 781401, Sandton 2146, South Africa) A nicely printed clubzine, digest size in card covers. The usual reviews and locs, but the speciality of this zine is fiction, with several stories in each issue. Definitely in the Top Five when it comes to cover art; Roberto Schima's wraparound drawings are excellent.

SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG #6 (The Usual from Garth Spencer, Box 15335, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 5B1) A catch-up issue of locs, plus a few editorial comments. The emphasis of this zine is on SF fanhistory and that perennial question "Wither fandom?".

ON SPEC #24 (C\$6 in Canada, US\$6 elsewhere, Visa accepted, from On Spec, Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G6) Canada's SF prozine; digest with colour covers. Leans to the style of ASIMOV'S or European-style SF.

MIMOSA #18 (The Usual from Nicki and Richard Lynch, Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875) Nicely produced, with a clean, crisp layout on saddle-stitched 8½ x 11. This zine specializes in SF fanhistory. Richard talks about his work in progress, a history of the 1960s picking up where Harry Warner left off. Elsewhere, a variety of fannish reminiscences on the good old days, plus locs.

CONTRACT V8#3 (The Usual from John Mansfield, 321 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B9) Newszine of Canadian SF conventions, with listings of upcoming cons and reports on those just held. Also the Canadian Unity Fan Fund report; vote for one of the two candidates or for the dissolution of the fund. In the good news, media cons continued to do poorly, although it may be too much to hope for their outright extirpation.

BUSSWARBLE #29 (The Usual from Michael Hailstone, 14 Cecil Road, Blackheath, New South Wales 2785, Australia) Mixture of fiction, travelogues, essays, and locs.

BARDIC RUNES #13 (\$4 from Michael McKenny, 424 Cambridge Street South, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4H5) A digest specializing in sword and scourgery fiction, with 11 stories and two poems. Wizards, heros, quests, and so forth. A harp named Moonsbreath in one of the stories gives you an idea.

BROKEN PENCIL #3 (\$4.95 from Broken Pencil, Box 203, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S7) Sold at newsagents; a paler version of FACTSHEET FIVE specializing in Canadian zines. Peculiar arrangement of zines by geographical region, and still a few "no known publisher" followed immediately by the name of the person who published it. But give them time and eventually the editors will catch on to how the zine world works. Selected articles from some of the zines reviewed are reprinted here. Also an announcement of Canzine 96, to be held on October 6, 1996, at The Library Imperial Pub in Toronto. BROKEN PENCIL serves the useful purpose of introducing zines to those who had no idea and only happened to see the magazine at the newsagent.

ROGUE RAVEN #48 (The Usual from Frank Denton, 14654 8th Avenue SW, Seattle, Washington 98166) Small perzine about a trip to England, and being visited in return by Australians.

SIDNEY SUPPEY'S QUARTERLY AND CONFUSED PET MONTHLY #23 (The Usual from Candi Strecker, Box 515, Brisbane, California 94005-0515) A retrospective issue, reprinting articles from the issues of 1979 to 1983. Some perzine stuff, some detournement collages, and other miscellaneous stuff. The editor writes about how she discovered zinedom and why she publishes, a good intro for anyone wavering over the thought of whether or not to publish.

ETHEL THE AARDVARK #66 (The Usual from Melbourne SF Club, Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia) Clubzine with news, reviews, locs.

OBSCURE #35 (US\$2 from Jim Romanesko, #101, 1305 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55105) A reviewzine which concentrates on a few reviews or news issues at a time, rather than a long list of capsule reviews. This ish is a consideration of the zine RUDE, ostensibly a perzine published by someone supposedly involved in a group sex living arrangement of four people. 'Someone' was shown to be Robert DuPree, an ordinary married man with a rich fantasy life. DuPree's response at being outed was to threaten legal action. Elsewhere, consideration of the e-zine versus the paperzine.

GEGENSCHEIN #74 (The Usual from Eric Lindsay, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde, New South Wales 2112, Australia) Perzine with a trip report about SF cons in USA and numerous book reviews.

2600: THE HACKER QUARTERLY, V13#1 (US\$5.50 from Box 752, Middle Island, New York 11953-0752 or at newsagents) I had heard tell of this publication some time ago but was surprised to see it on sale at a newsagent. Published by a group of hackers specializing in telephone systems, although they will go after computer systems as well. A number of articles on how to alter cellphones and do other illegal stuff. What amazes me is that anyone can be dumb enough to associate with this magazine, as I'm sure half the readers must be law enforcement groups or telco security officers. But then again, perhaps not, in view of how easy it is to break into phone systems with the methods described here. Recommended reading for any hacker, CSIS operative, or the Ministry of Communication mandarins.

KNARLEY KNEWS #57 (The Usual from Henry Welch, 1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, Wisconsin 53024-2017) Mostly locs but this time around Scott Patri weighs in with his thoughts on Piers Anthony and fan feuds.

FOSFAX #180 (The Usual from FOSFA, Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281) 70 pages of microprint, supposedly a clubzine, but precious little of that. A solid mass of writing, with extended book reviews and SF con reports. I'm not particularly amazed that Joseph Major reads so many books; what awes me is that he can write extended reviews of them at great length. I have enough trouble thinking up a capsule review. The endless Heinlein retrospective by Major continues in this issue. Meanwhile, over in the political section, Tim Lane carries on about American politics, and what with the impending elections there he has no lack of things to discuss. FOSFAX is atypical of SF zines in that it actually mentions SF, not once or twice, but with great frequency. This zine's reputation in the outer zinedom is based on its rightist politics, but notwithstanding that, it is an SF zine. The loccol is mostly political, it being easier to froth at the mouth over Waco and Ruby Ridge than a Heinlein juvenile. I used to think it was mostly infantile arguing, but not since I got Netscape access and saw what the alt.news-groups looked like. At least FOSFAXers take the time to explain their point of view, not just one or two sentences of flaming per post like alt.fandom.cons or alt.zines.

GLOBAL MAIL (US\$3 from Ashley Parker Owens, Box 410837, San Francisco, California 94141) A requestzine that acts as a contact point for mail artists and zinesters. An excellent place to plug into the underground network, with hundreds of classified ads from people who want participants for mail art projects, political actions, contributions for their zines, and exchanges. I always find at least a few addresses to trade zines or send material to for mail art projects. Also letters and answers to survey questions, mail art etiquette, post office matters, and personal reports. A report on Netstrikes, whereby government servers in France were overloaded by e-mail during the A-bomb tests.

THE RELUCTANT FAMULUS #44 (The Usual from Tom Sadler, 422 West Maple Avenue, Adrian, Michigan 49221-1627) Some thoughts on fandom in the editorial, various reviews of prozines, books, and fanzines, and locs. Also a visit to Prague and Budapest, Terry Jeeves' film career (he was an extra for "A Chorus Of Disapproval"), and Sheryl Birkhead on veterinary school life.

PROPER BOSKONIAN #36 (The Usual from New England Science Fiction Association, Box 809, Framingham, Massachusetts 01701-0203) Semi-annual clubzine with various news and reviews. Evelyn Leeper, who writes con reports that make Joseph Major's Heinlein studies look like a capsule review, discourses on the 1995 WorldCon in Glasgow. She manages to get a page or so out of each panel she went to. It is fashionable to sneer at fans who actually go to panels but I disagree; Leeper does good work.

BIBLIOZINE #47 (The Usual from John Held Jr, Box 410837, San Francisco, California 94141-0837) This issue is a work-in-progress towards a bibliography of dadazines of the San Francisco area circa 1970-1984. A conference of mail art zine editors of those days was recently held, and herewith presented short summaries of some zines of that period. VILE, for example, copied the format from LIFE magazine but was actually a reaction against FILE, an earlier zine that betrayed the cause and denounced mail art. Sort of like FOSFAX coming out for Clinton as a good man to trust. The dadazine reviews will help a hobby with a notoriously short memory to realize that others had gone on before.

DRIFT #81 (The Usual from C.F. Kennedy, Box 40, 90 Shuter Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K6) Zine and book review stream-of-consciousness flow, with the tragic tale of a bookreader and how he came to that sorry state. The back cover is a scanned photo of The Nova Scotian Hermit, the Maritimes' answer to The Hagerstown Hermit.

CHALLENGER #4 (The Usual from Guy Lillian, Box 53092, New Orleans, Louisiana 70153-3092) 102 pages of solid content that makes FOSFAX look like a convention flyer. Starting off is an article on the late Harry Moore, a recently deceased SF fan who finished his life as an eccentric recluse. His collection of rare paintings and magazines was lost due to neglect. The story of that loss is a cautionary tale to us all. Whether you collect SF books, mail art, or postage stamps, it is most wise to consider the ultimate fate of your collection after you meet your ultimate fate. Richard Dengrove writes about the Rosicrucians, sort of Masonic Scientologists, who developed in the 1600s and are most familiar for their ads in the classifieds next to the jock strap ads. Elsewhere is a look at AIDS epidemiology and the question of it perhaps not being a virus but rather bad science lumping in unrelated diseases. An interview with Samanda Jeude fills in a bit of detail about her life, and the TAFF controversy that so embarrassed the reputation of fanzine fans. I've said before that it would be fun to see a Trekkie win TAFF or a fanzine Hugo, just to see the reaction from certain quarters. The Editor, who is a barrister, has an account of one of his cases, an American version of Rumpole and, alas, unsuccessful. A lengthy lettercol.

THYME #109/AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS #69/ARTYCHOKE #16 (The Usual from Alan Stewart, Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia) Three zines published as one. The first is general news and notes, a controversy or two, reviews, and locs. The second is a book listing with numerous book reviews. The third specializes in SF art, this time featuring Linda Michaels. It also continues on my favourite part of this triptych zine, the Space-Time Buccaneers. This is a time travel saga of refreshing originality, worthy of republication as a book.

ICHTHYOELECTROANALGESIA #2 (US\$2 or zine trade from Sean McLachlan, Box 1933, Columbia, Missouri 65205-1933) The editor is an archaeologist, and this zine covers digs in Bulgaria, why the Mayans never used the wheel except as a toy (no draft animals to pull carts), colonization of the Pacific islands, what happened to the Ark of the Covenant, and how to get visas in hostile countries. The articles are enjoyable reading and provide an interesting understanding of their topics.

FTT #20 (The Usual from Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU, England) Judith on job-changing, someone else on life as a Republican, a Hanna relative writes about a tour across the USA that makes the movie DELIVERANCE seem like a Disney movie, and an investigation into the possibility that the ancient Chinese may have reached Australia. The locs, of course, and finally Joseph summing up with an account of a protest against a freeway bypass.

WILD HEIRS #14 (The Usual from Arnie Katz, 330 South Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, Nevada 89107) A good thick SF zine produced by an enthusiastic editorial collective determined to put the extra 'a' back into 'faanish'. A compendium of editorial columns and locs on matters of SF fandom and personal stories.

FREETHINKER #5 (The Usual from Tom Feller, Box 13626, Jackson, Mississippi 39236) This zine was formerly THE REASONABLE FREETHINKER. The name was changed not due to the editor becoming an irrational madman but because he wanted a shorter title and because the acronym TRF was already taken. An account of an accountant's convention (maybe I should rephrase that) which demonstrates that such conventions are not much different than SF cons. Movie reviews abound, followed by Viking stuff, satellite insurance, book reviews, and locs.

PINKETTE #15D (The Usual from Karen Pender-Gunn, Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia) Various clippings, some book reviews, travel reports, and a few locs.

LIME GREEN NEWS #15 (US\$2 or mail art contribution, from Carolyn Substitute, Box 771, Florissant, Missouri 63032-0771) Mail art zine, starting off with how-to articles on paper-making and casting. Some poems and collages follow, then miscellaneous commentary, zine reviews, and mail art project listings. This zine is a good introduction to the fun of mail art.

RIK & CAROLYN'S INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF SLACK #1 (US\$2 from Rik Selby, Box 771, Florissant, Missouri 63032-0771) One-shot mail art zine with the usual stuff one might expect to see. Also a report on art cars, those specially modified vehicles painted with slogans or weird art. If a zine had wheels, this is what it would look like. Some slacker stuff elsewhere plus zine reviews.

8-TRACK MIND #88/89 (US\$4 from Russ Forster, Box 90, East Detroit, Michigan 48021-0090) Card-cover digest in Ace Doubles style, with two issues back-to-back as one. Very well produced. Most of the content is locs on where to get 8-track cartridges, how much they are worth, a travel diary about showing the film SO WRONG THEY'RE RIGHT (about 8-trackism), old ads, and quadrophonic sound. Although the emphasis is on 8-tracks, the underlying theme is that analogue sound is not an obsolete technology, whatever means it may be. Even CDs still need analogue speakers. The consensus of the loccol discussions is that the days of buying lots of 8-tracks and players cheap at thrift stores or yard sales are just about gone. Anyone who wanted to get rid of their 8-track junk has probably done so, and enough people are now in the hobby that 8-tracks have become serious collectibles. This zine is the focal point of that hobby, and very well done in both format and content. Recommended.

TOPOZINE #10 (The Usual from Fred Argoff, 1204 Avenue U, #1290, Brooklyn, New York 11229-4107) Devoted to maps, not just the usual "That must be it over there" type of topographical maps, but why supermarkets are laid out as they are, mental maps, useless maps, and the best places to buy lottery tickets. Trick question: there are four capital cities of countries which are border cities. A real toughie for Trivial Pursuit fans! The mental maps were part of a study which demonstrated that people tend to prefer the region of the country they are living in.

KNOW NEWS V4#2 (The Usual from Alden Scott Crow, Box 1948, Fair Oaks, California 95628-1948) A themed issue on mail, ranging from a Jimmy Dean stamp, office supplies and fiction about mail. Poems about mail, essays about why snail mail will never die, and, off-theme, underground houses.

APPARATCHIK #62 (The Usual from Andy Hooper, 4228 Francis Avenue North #103, Seattle, Washington 98103) Bi-weekly SF fanzine with news, thoughts on the state of fandom, and locs.

VEGAS FAN DIARY #1 (The Usual from Arnie Katz, 330 South Decatur Blvd., Suite 152, Las Vegas, Nevada 89108) A new perzine from an SF fan of long-standing in the field. In diary format as the title suggests, but working in lots of fannish news and notes.

DEROGATORY REFERENCE #82 (The Usual from Arthur Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers, New York 10704-1814) Perzine, with commentary on credit card abuse, Windows 95, freelance writing, reviews, temporary work, and Mencken.

NEVER QUITE ARRIVING #4 (The Usual from Christina Lake, 21 Sunnyside Place, Belmont, Massachusetts 021178) This is a British perzine despite the address given above, as the editor is on a world tour and currently stopping in the USA until the end of November. Not unnaturally, the zine talks about how the trip came to be, along with con reportage, life after divorce, and locs.

TOMORROW SPECULATIVE FICTION #21 (C\$7 at newsagents, or from Box 6038, Evanston, Illinois 60204) Prozine in the 8½ x 11 size, fiction only. Normally I never buy prozines anymore except for ON SPEC, but this ish has Elisabeth Vonarburg's story "Cogito", which turns out to be the only good story in the bunch. Two other stories telegraph their endings about the first page, and the rest were not enough to convince to buy this magazine regularly.

ERG #134 (The Usual from Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5RQ England) Laments that things aren't what they used to be, some thoughts about astrologers and other nutcases, continuing series on first issues of SF magazines and weird aircraft, and locs.

UNDER THE OZONE HOLE #14 (The Usual from Karl Johanson, 4129 Carey Road, Victoria, British Columbia V8Z 4G5) Miscellany about Lotusland fandom, some speculative non-fiction, Star Trek/Windows 95 parody, clippings on SFdom, Canfandom news and notes, and locs. Also the Clam Shoot '96, attended by dignitaries from as far away as Lethbridge, Alberta. John Wilcox Herbert reports from the B.C. campaign trail, and explains why one should never walk into a crowd of NDPers and shout "Bingo!".

GRADIENT #14 (The Usual from Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828-1023) Genzine starting off with an explanation of why Robert has become interested in China. Elsewhere the neverending multiplicity of Supermans, the essence of SF, reviews, and locs.

VISIONS OF PARADISE #67 (same as GRADIENT) Diaryzine in the life of a math teacher.

ON SPEC #25 (\$6 from On Spec, Box 4727, Edmonton, Al-

berta T6E 5G6) Canada's SF prozine, a digest-size of fiction and a few poems. Good cover art as always, and the usual range of stories, generally equivalent to ASIMOV'S.

GALACTO-CELTIC NEWSFLASH #14 (The Usual from Franz Miklis, A-5151, Nussdorf 64, Austria) Celtic Beltane celebrations, the 1000th year of Austria, and a vacation to Turkey. Europeans are taught they defeated the Turks at the gates of Vienna, so out of curiosity Franz asked a Turk what he was taught, getting a reply that they gave up because the weather was so bad. Reminds me of how Canadians and Americans have different views of the War of 1812. Excellent art in this zine.

POPMATIC #1 (The Usual from Scott Jehn, #502, 240 - 11 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2R 0C3) Mostly handprinted genzine, with collages, bad poetry, and miscellany. To be judged as the first effort it is. It seems a bit aimless but shows promise. It would be interesting to learn more about the pirate radio station briefly mentioned; it can only be heard near downtown Calgary so I wasn't aware it existed.

THE BLEARY EYES #5 (The Usual from Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1LA, England) This is the latest installment of a reprint series of SF fan-fiction from the 1950s, featuring the Goon Defective Agency stories, most of which hold up quite well and do not necessarily require a knowledge of that era's fans. The detective parodies are concluded by a modern piece "Oh Calcutta" in which John Berry reminds us that all of the talk about black holes is talk only, and while there are suspected black holes, none have been proven as such. Terry Jeeves had the best article, writing on disguises. One does not need false whiskers; dress instead as a Scot in kilt and bagpipes: "The world is full of Scotchmen, but there are not so many beards around."

TRANVERSIONS #5 (\$4.95 from Island Specialty Reports, 1019 Colville Road, Victoria, British Columbia V9A 4P5) Semipolizine of fiction and poetry, leaning somewhat to horror.

ANSIBLE #108 (The Usual from Janice Murray, Box 75684, Seattle, Washington 98125-0684) A double-side single sheet of microprint news by Dave Langford of England, who reports the goings-on of British SFdom. Proof that a Hugo-winner does not have to put out a 100-page issue; the funniest zine in fandom.

OBSCURE #36 (US\$2 from Jim Romenesko, #101, 1305 Grand Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55105) A reviewzine which takes a detailed look at a few zines or publishers instead of listings of capsule reviews. This issue continues on with the still-unfolding story of Robert DuPree, a zinester who was caught out impersonating a man supposedly part of a four-way group marriage. DuPree's response was to flame everyone in sight with letters and threats to sic a lawyer on them. Another zine publisher's response was to start printing all those letters in a purpose-built zine called KOOL. On other matters, news about about all those books coming down the pipeline to your local bookstore about zines, the impending death of a zine editor from cancer and his efforts to establish a transition to ensure the zine will survive, and some miscellaneous items. Well recommended; what alt.zines could be if it was properly moderated.

MOSHASSUCK REVIEW, August 1996 (Zine trade from Ken Faig Jr, 2311 Swainwood Drive, Glenview, Illinois 60025-2741) An apazine specializing in H.P. Lovecraft. A continuing series on Faig's research into HPL's ancestry, reviews of books relating to Lovecraftiana, and a report on the 1996 convention of the National Amateur Press Association, founded 1876 and still zineing.

ECURB: ZONE 3 (The Usual from Bruce Barbarasch, 855 Printempo Place, San Jose, California 95134) A zine in the same format as OPUNTIA but with unreduced typewriting and handwriting. Various commentaries on raising worms, teaching, the scale of life in cities, nutrition labels on containers, and why travel isn't as great as people say it is.

THE LUTHER BLISSETT PROJECT (Mail art contribution to Federico Guglielmi, Box 744, 40100 Bologna centrale, Italy) Luther Blissett is a multiple name, that is, a name that can be used by anyone for mail art networking and hoaxing the mundanes. This project is to get his name in a newspaper or magazine as a real person; if you succeed then send details to Guglielmi; documentation to all. In the package I got, there were various articles on the topic. One essay, by Luther Blissett, details a hoax on a trendy publishing house who published a Blissett book of gibberish under the impression it was postmodernist criticism. What makes this funnier is that Guglielmi also sent me a booklet GUY DEBORD IS REALLY DEAD, about the group Situationist International, authored by Luther Blissett, and full of excruciating ideological jargon that only a postmodernist could understand.

SOUTHERN FANDOM CONFEDERATION BULLETIN V6#5 (The Usual from Tom Feller, Box 13626, Jackson, Mississippi 39236-3626) Specializing in the fandom of southern USA, this zine has listings of clubs, cons, and zines of the area. A useful resource for the fanhistorian or zine trader.

BCSFAZINE #278 (The Usual from WCSFA, #110, 1855 West 2nd Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V6J 1J1) Clubzine of the Lower Mainland. This issue deals mostly on V-Con, both past and future.

ANGLOMAN (NuAge Editions, Box 8, Station E, Montréal, Québec H2T 3A5 or at bookstores) Normally I avoid superhero comics, but I do have the NORTHGUARD series of the late 1980s, one of whose characters, Fleur de Lys, appeared on a Canadian postage stamp last year. From the same people who brought you NORTHGUARD, is a new satirical comic strip ANGLOMAN, collected into a trade paperback. Subtitled "Making The World Safe For Apostrophes!", I should caution that it is much funnier with a knowledge of the Canadian language wars. The star is Angloman, in ordinary life Eaton M. McGill, an insurance underwriter. Assisted by faithful sidekick West Island Lad (but only until 11 p.m., as he is a high-school student and that is when the last bus goes to his home) and occasionally working with superhero Poutineette (she immobilizes her opponents with a thick stream of poutine). A list of superheroes is included at the beginning of the book so you can keep track. A number of them are registered with the Superhuman Abilities Directorate of Agriculture Canada (Ministry of Agriculture). Le Capitaine Souche bears a startling resemblance to a recent Québec premier dedicated to abolishing bilingual street signs, separatism, and the Pure Wool Association. He speaks English with a British accent (which was true in real life because he learned the language over there), transforms into his superhero alter ego by chanting the number '101' (the Québec language law was Bill 101), and ignores a hostage situation because he is too busy arguing politics with Blocman.

Angloman's Fortress of Two Solitudes is located below the Sunlife Building, again a thing funnier by knowing about the feuds between the national financial institutions and the Québec government. The Pure Wool bit is based on ancestor-proud Québécois who call themselves 'pure laine' or pure wool if they can prove a direct descent from an ancestor who lived in New France. Many other characters from Canadian politics show up, such as The Northern Magus, aka Pierre Trudeau (and that was a real nickname applied to him) and various

other prime ministers past and present. As superheroes go, these one don't seem to be that interested in doing good; they spend much of their time arguing politics.

There is one segment that does explain by example why the anglos ran into trouble in the first place in Québec, a touching story about a francophone who goes into Eaton's department store and can't get service in his own language. (The apostrophe wars, incidentally, started over a fight with the T. Eaton company as to whether their sign should be Eaton's or Eaton, under Bill 101.)

Humour is funniest when it is topical, and ANGLOMAN is topical for Canadians. The hazard of topical humour is that it dates rapidly. There is nothing so dull as old topical humour, particularly when its characters and historical associations have faded completely from the public memory. ANGLOMAN can probably survive in subdued form, as while the characters will have vanished, the language wars will no doubt continue. That Trudeau was the Northern Magus and that '101' had special significance will be boring old facts to the next generation, just as jokes about Mackenzie King or Uncle Louis mean little to me. I can read through old Norris or Giles annuals and still smile, but do the Gen Xers give a toss about Stanfield, the Waffle NDPers, or Pierre Elliott Himself?

COPY-CAT SUICIDE (US\$5/C\$7 cash only from Gary Johnson, Johnson Tattoo Studio, 25119 Ecorse Road, Taylor, Michigan 48180) Detourment rock in the best style; if you liked the Tape-Beatles, you'll like this cassette. Six pieces on Side 1 make good use of sampling and music to create a collage of Bible thumping and bass beats. The other side has a good mix to start off, but is subsequently followed by a selection of mediocre to poor samples and sound bites. This creates the impression that the group, Surface Noise, ran out of ideas and dumped in filler to make up the time. Overall, a good cassette; recommended to the sampler and mail art crowd.

THE FADAZINES
by Dale Speirs

Zines as we know them today originated in the middle 1800s, when amateur journalism became a popular hobby, prompted in particular by the foundation of the National Amateur Press Association and other apas. The apas are still around, multiplied manifold. In the 1930s, SF fans began issuing fanzines. In the 1960s, mail art zines started to appear, and a large explosion in zine numbers occurred over the past two decades thanks to FACTSHEET FIVE. Although SF fans have some vague awareness that they were not the first to self-publish (thanks mainly to historians such as Harry Warner Jr. and others), it has been all too evident that other zine publishers are ignorant of the hobby, and suppose that little or nothing existed before FACTSHEET FIVE or mail art. Taking F.F. as my example, I present the story of another zine explosion that took place a century ago, and has been forgotten by the zine hobby.

On May 15, 1894, two Harvard students named Herbert S. Stone and Ingalls Kimball published a little magazine called CHAP-BOOK. It was noted for its original literary content, fresh-looking layout, and quality of printing. It lasted until 1898, when it was sold to the Chicago magazine DIAL, and in its time inspired hundreds of imitators. A few of these lasted past the turn of the century, but the vast majority only went a couple or three issues, if that. The peak of this fad was 1896/97; the zines were variously referred to as bibelots, ephemerals, or fadazines. Most were attempts to copy CHAP-BOOK or parodies, whether intended or not. One fadazine that survived into the next century was Elbert Hubbard's PHILISTINE. In one of those strange but true stories, Herbert Stone and Hubbard died in 1915 on the Lusitania, each returning from a business trip in Europe.

Most fadazines would have vanished into history were

it not for Frederick Winthrop Faxon, who ran a checklist of fadazines in BULLETIN OF BIBLIOGRAPHY in 1903. His series listed hundreds of titles; I append only a few herewith.

THE BAUBLE (1895 to 1897) out of Washington, D.C., and subtitled "There is no slander in an allowed fool".

THE EGO (1902) from Carbondale, Pennsylvania. "... for anybody that wants it, and especially for those who don't".

THE FAD (1896 to 1897), a weekly from San Antonio, Texas

FISIC FOR FOLKS (1899) from Leominster, Massachusetts. "Printed sometimes by the Society for the Dispersion of Common Ignorance".

JOHN-A-DREAMS (1896 to 1897) from New York. "A magazine for the conservative iconoclast and the practical dreamer". Sounds like a premature FOSFAX.

PETIT JOURNAL DES REFUSEES (1896) printed on wallpaper in San Francisco. The first mail art zine?

The fadazines dwindled quickly after the first two years but many kept popping up as late as 1903. The financial panic of 1907 pretty much finished off the fadazines. A world war delayed the next resurgence of little magazines until the 1920s, but these were generally small press periodicals, not zines as we understand them now.

The next spurt of zines came in the 1930s and 1940s, as SF fans discovered the thrill of publishing. Many SFers got into the habit of thinking they were the epitome of zines, and resented intrusion into zine pubbing by the media fans, mail artists, and punk rockers.

Detournement is the art of recycling things into new works with meanings unintended by their originators, a popular example being comic strips with the old words excised and new dialogue inserted. Photocopy collages and music sampling are common enough even in the mainstream. The advent of home video has given many the idea of erasing the chatter of a news presenter on a television show and substituting different voices that might prove more ironic and funnier. Detournement works best when the reader knows the original work and can appreciate the bizarre contrast of the revision.

And so to the documentary movie SONIC OUTLAWS, a movie by Craig Baldwin about merry pranksters who detourne billboards, Barbie dolls, and music. It is also a diatribe against excessively restrictive copyright law and how megacorporations do far more censoring with lawsuits than the government ever does with telecommunications law.

SONIC OUTLAWS covers a representative range of groups working in copyright violation, but spends the bulk of its time on the group Negativland. This group used a song from the band U2 interlaced with a bootleg tape of a disk jockey swearing on the air because he got a listener's request to dedicate a song to a dead dog. Negativland issued the detourned work in an album that bore just a bit too much resemblance to a U2 album. Island Records, U2's label, sued. They won mainly because the defendants could not afford the legal bill to fight the case as 'fair use' under copyright law. The movie covers how the group works, showing us how one member tapes cellular phone calls for later use as detourned samples ("Oops, we just broke federal law.") and how others mix and match audiovisual samples for their act.

Negativland demonstrates one easy type of prank when the group puts out a press release that they are cancelling a 17-city tour because they are being investigated by the FBI in relation to a song of their's that might have inspired a young boy to axe-murder his family. Since there really was such an axe-murder, the news media reported the story without checking. This would be funny except that it happens too often even without the assist of pranksters.

Other groups who make appearances are the Tape Beatles, who did a lot of cut-and-splice audio tape work, and the Survival Research Laboratories, who alter billboards by night in very large scale detournement. John Oswald makes a brief appearance; he does remixes of recorded songs, often with the consent of the originators. Oswald's fame arises from one such album illustrated by a cover depicting Michael Jackson's head grafted onto the nude body of a young woman. Most people would probably agree with Oswald that this photofake comes close to the truth, but Jackson's record label suppressed the album with the usual legal threats.

The Barbie Liberation Organization buys talking Barbies and G.I. Joes, switches their microchips, then sneaks the dolls back into the store shelves. This movie shows news clips about the results, as baffled children demonstrate G.I. Joes who say "Let's go shopping" in a girl's voice.

There is some serious talk amidst the laughter of pranking and sampling. None of these groups reproduce copyrighted works wholesale for pirating. Their altered work is different enough that no one could mistake it as the real thing. A U2 fan would not buy a Negativland work under the impression that it was by U2. A defaced billboard is obviously not the manufacturer's ad. But megacorporations are denying even fair use by using lawsuits to bankrupt the defendants.

THE DRASTIC DRAGON OF DRACO, TEXAS by Elizabeth Scarborough (Bantam, 1986). I normally avoid fantasy, in particular if the blurb goes on about some young lad or lass who must fight against an evil overlord and save the universe (or galaxy; some blurb writers aren't sure of the difference). However, this one caught my eye on the bookshelf. In the Old West of Texas, a rancher named Frank Drake is having more than just the usual problems with Injuns and surly help. A dragon has been summoned by one of the aforesaid surly help, and is busy drinking the river dry and roasting all the livestock. The dragon is an alien, known to the ancients of Mexico as Kululkan or Quetzalcoatl. Recently revived from dormancy, it is ready to lecture the chosen few about the benefits of civilization, unaware that while it was sleeping the past centuries, anything it might have to say has been surpassed by modern humans. Into this mix arrives Pelagia Harper, aka Valentine Lovelace. She is the daughter of an alcoholic newspaper publisher and has dreams of being a novelist. She comes out west to gather local colour for her book and gets a plentitude of it, what with being kidnapped by Injuns, held for ransom by Drake, and communing with the dragon. The dragon is upset at the incompetence of the priestess who summoned him, and is looking for a better class of servants, such as Harper. When he isn't ravaging the countryside, everyone else is preparing for the next attack. As one stranger to the ranch observes, "You got some kinda wildlife in these parts, ma'am". The details of the Old West are more authentic than most such stories, with emphasis on the odours, dirt, and constant worry over water that the true cowboys dealt with.

THE DOROTHY PARKER MURDER CASE by George Baxt (International Polygonics, 1984). Not her that was murdered but rather she and Alexander Woollcott investigate two murders. A fictionalized account of the Algonquin Round Table. All the usual suspects of the late 1920s New

York City literary scene appear, along with the sordid side of that era, such as organized crime and widespread corruption. A humorous read, with every joke attributed to the Algonquin writers trotted out somewhere in this novel. The ending was rushed, but the characters and background are well done. I have a small collection of biographies on the writers of this group, which helps fill in some of the details. The opening and closing scenes tie in together and delineate Mrs. Parker's psychology. Also appearances by various actors and producers whose names you will recognize if you know the history of that decade. Such as George S. Kaufman, described so: "His hair, an oversized bird's nest when properly looked after, now gave him the appearance of a Zulu warrior fighting a high wind".

ANYTHING YOU CAN DO ... by Darrel Langart (Doubleday, 1963) is the account of an alien, the Niipe, forced to crashland on Earth after its spaceship was disabled. The Niipe is of a very pragmatic race. What was a full story in "The Cold Equations" becomes only a passing mention in this novel: "There had not been enough supplies for two to survive the long inward fall toward the distant sun. The Niipe, having discovered the fact first, killed his brother while the other was not looking". Langart chronicles the Niipe's decades of exile on Earth, trying to build a communicator to reach the home world while searching for the true masters of Earth. It refuses to believe the soft bipeds are Real People. The Niipe is well characterized in true alien psychology; it is not simply a ravenous monster but acts on what it considers logic. Nor do the Earthlings try to destroy it, but rather spend years attempting to establish contact. Hollywood and most SF publishers would now turn this novel into a monster movie. Langart makes it a good read by writing a believable narrative of how we might establish First Contact.

DEWEY DECIMATED by Charles Goodrum (Crown, 1977) is the account of murder in a rare-books library. Office politics between the Manuscript Division and the Rare Book Division over budget allocations. Suspects flock together like birds of a feather. Follow-on murders in the usual manner to dispose of obvious suspects to the first murder. An air-headed P.R. woman, just out of one of those eastern colleges, and facing dialogue to make any even-halfway feminist commit murder. Behind the scenes of a library, including a neat twist to cover up theft of rare editions by substituting cheaper quality copies.

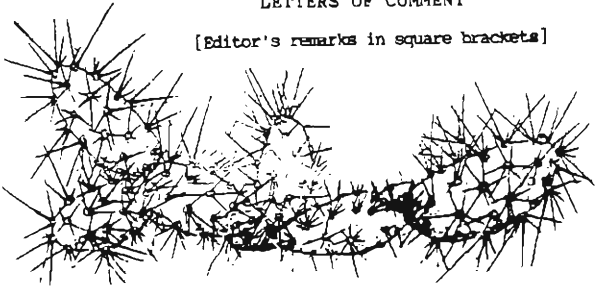
DON'T DIE BEFORE YOU'RE DEAD by Yevgeny Yevtushenko (Key Porter, 1995) is a semi-fictional account of the 1991 coup attempt that led to the breakup of the Soviet Union. Yevtushenko puts himself into the book, but adds various characters such as a retired soccer player, a secret policeman, an émigré returned in time for the action, and a lovesick sewer worker. The theme of the book is the regret of many Russians for things they should have said and done but never had the courage to do, be it declaring one's love for a woman instead of letting her go and regretting it for decades, or failing to stand up against the dictatorship. As the characters rush to the Moscow barricades, their personal troubles mirror those of the country. While Yeltsin stands on the barricades making speeches, and just as surprised by the turn of events as anyone, in the background Yevtushenko frantically scribbles poems to be read to the assembled masses. The KGB must also adjust; to use its tanks or not? Everyone has the same fear of declaring for one side or the other too soon, mirrored by the fears of the characters for what they should do in their personal lives. Yevtushenko wanders in and out of the storyline, bracing up fiction with the facts as he saw them on the barricades, pointing out indirectly that Russians had to face the same lesson as the Germans: Hitler didn't do it by himself and neither did Stalin. If everyone is guilty, who can be tried?

THE LOREMASTERS by Leslie Gadallah (Del Rey 1988) begins at first like any post-disaster quest but veers off course. The time is after the Separation, when the Philes live in high-tech enclaves and the Phobes are dispersed through the countryside in primitive towns and societies. The Philes are running out of fissiles for their nuclear reactors and search the Phobe lands for possible Old People reactor sites. Reese is out on one such search near the town of Monn when he rouses the suspicions of the Phobes and is taken prisoner. He then recedes into the background for the rest of the novel, and the scene alternates between the Philes in the enclave and the ruling elite of Monn. The Philes debate whether they should rescue Reese by overwhelming force or try to wrinkle him out through subtle means. The Governor of Monn tries to decide what to do as he is buffeted by conflicting advice and power plays from the military, the ministry of finance, and the church.

There is a drought on, and barbarian hordes threaten on the borders of Monn. Should the Governor buy food to see the people through, or spend the money on a strong army to preserve their society? His financial advisors say there is no money in any event, and the True Church maneuvers to establish a theocratic government by stirring up a witch hunt, Reese and the Philes being the witches. The Philes can crush Monn with technological force, but as they find out, an archer can kill as fast as a machine gunner. The Monnish fear of Phile witchcraft is what protects the enclave, but if they realize that Philes are only using sufficiently-advanced technology, the Phobes will overrun the enclave. Each side in the multicornered debate has its position presented, and indeed Gadallah paints herself into a corner with the political scene she sets up. The ending was a bit forced, with sudden rainfall to break the drought, and an all-sides-satisfied ending that wasn't entirely believable, but for the most part this novel is a change from the usual Good-versus-Evil stereotyped quest.

LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



FROM: Sean McLachlan
Box 1933
Columbia, Missouri 65205-1933

1996-6-4

Ken Faig's "Zines: An Eo-History" was especially inspirational to me. Reading about the history of amateur publishing makes me feel part of a grand tradition. It makes me want to create the best zine I can. I think that the zine community has a few hurdles to overcome. The first is surviving their own success. Zines have become very trendy in the 1990s and readership may decline sharply when they become passé. Another hurdle is competition from e-zines, which are easier to acquire and generally free. Can print zines compete? Apas face the same problem with newsgroups. For print zines to survive, their editors need to concentrate on their strong points: personality and quality. In our increasingly isolated age, receiving a zine that was handled by its editor, along with a note and a hand-addressed envelope, has a personal feel to it. This experience cannot be reproduced by logging on to a website or newsgroup. High quality is important. Many e-zines rely heavily on graphics at the expense of useful and informative writing. Other parts of the Internet, especially Usenet newsgroups, have a low signal-to-noise ratio. With the increased interest in the amateur press, editors have an excellent chance to increase the long-term popularity of their hobby. To do this, they need to redouble their efforts to make the network strong and vibrant for years to come.

FROM: Chuck Welch
Box 370
Etna, New Hampshire 03750-0370
1996-6-1

I think some purists in the mail art fossils net might give you real shit about judging mail art zines. Sorry that you couldn't reach my website. The address (URL) changed about two months ago. Please try this new address: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~emailart> I am posting NETSHAKER ONLINE at that site.

[I tried the address on Netscape. Yahoo, Infoseek, Excite, Lycos, and Webcrawler did not have it, but I finally located it on Alta Vista. This website is the Electronic Museum of Mail Art (EMMA). Besides the back issues of NETSHAKER ONLINE, a mail art newsletter, it has the anthology ETERNAL NETWORK, a history and overview of mail art which makes an excellent introduction to the subject. Elsewhere in EMMA is the Email Art Gallery, with a tribute to Ray Johnson (1927-1995) the father of modern mail art. (Some of the pages are still missing due to Dartmouth changing servers.) Also in EMMA is the Artistamp Gallery and various links and directories.]

[Few zines trade more than about 200-300 copies, so the decline of the trendies will not make much difference. A loss of the latter will still leave thousands of zines to choose from. E-zines, from my use of the Internet, are no threat to paper zines; there is a place for both. Most zinesters on the Net have free access via academic or company computers, the owners of which could wipe them out overnight if they become a problem (ex. legal cases because of obscenity laws, libel or trademark violation)

[continued next page]

or budget cuts require that the user pay the true cost of maintaining a website. Newsgroups are no competition whatsoever; they're committing suicide because of unregulated flaming, spamming, unrelated topics, and discontinuous conversation threads. The bigger the size of the Internet, the more people will appreciate editing. Quality content in paper zines is where the editors must redouble their efforts, and that is what will save the Papernet.]

[No new medium of communication has wiped out the old, albeit it may reduce its size or change it. Radio did not kill the stage, television altered radio but did not kill it, movies were not killed by television, and the Internet will not kill paper magazines or books. I do expect dramatic changes in the publishing industry; reference works will soon be only online or on CD-ROM. Newspapers will be replaced by subscribed mailing lists, but definitive texts and learned reviews will still be on paper because print is always compatible and (on acid-free paper) longer lasting than electronic storage. Your paper zine and my paper zine can be read anywhere; good luck downloading e-zines with lots of graphics and rereading them twenty years from now.]

FROM: Joseph Major 1996-5-31
3307H River Chase Court
Louisville, Kentucky 40218-1832

"In 1965, the Underground Press did not exist", says THE UNDERGROUND AND ALTERNATIVE PRESS IN BRITAIN. Yet there were small-scale independent publications that lacked such a pompous, self-righteous view of themselves as the bleeding edge of social ferment. The publications of the reactionary right have the same characteristics, but for some reason never quite seem to be considered worthy of mention in such works.

The Timebinders do not bother to update their website because they were all too busy posting to each other on Langdon Charts and the Breendoggle. Then when these topics burned out they were too uninterested to update it. When the big discussions were going on, I would get half-a-dozen posts a day from the Timebinders list. Now that they have burned out, there are long hiatuses between new postings and not much there to say.

[I've been sending fanhistory issues of OPUNTIA to some of the Timebinders south of the border, but the silence is deafening. It would be nice if their website had, as an example, Garth Spencer's fanhistories, Rob Hansen on British fandom, and THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR. In short, quality content.]

FROM: Scott Crow 1996-7-22
Box 1948
Fair Oaks, California 95628-1948

I was just re-reading the copy of BRIC-A-BRAC you mailed to me. Is that 1885 date correct? Did Canada have an apa organization in the 1880s?

[Yes, there were zines a century ago, although I have nothing about Canadian apas. I suspect the Canadians would have belonged only to American apas. To put it in perspective, Calgary was still a village in 1885 and the major influx of settlers onto the prairies would not begin for another six years, when the first Ukrainian colonists arrived. The only major cities were back east, and even as BRIC-A-BRAC was being published, civil war had begun in western Canada as the Second Riel Rebellion got underway. Incidentally, for newer readers to OPUNTIA, the BRIC-A-BRAC is a photocopy of an 1885 zine. I have a few copies left; if you'd like one, just write to me and I'll include it with your next issue of OPUNTIA.]

One phrase caught my eye: "Every coarse word, and every bit of slang appearing in an amateur paper, does something to retard the progress of the 'dom.'" Isn't it interesting how today zines flaunt free speech with exceedingly 'coarse' words. I love zines, but I also wish some were done with more class and style. I sometimes read classic books and magazines, and I marvel at their precise, dynamic language. Many of these magazines have a classic style that is lost today. I bemoaned the day when THE NEW YORKER began splashing obscenities on every page.

[Many zine publishers are looking to shock people and attract attention thereby, it being much easier to do that than come up with good editorial material. I find the same thing in modern stand-up comedy; the only comedian who used profanity for a valid purpose rather than cheap laughs was George Carlin in his routine "Seven Words You Can Never Say On Television".]

FROM: Kevin Welch 1996-7-11
 Box 2195
 Madison, Wisconsin 53701

The evolution of the Internet is in an early, amateur stage, and this is shown by the relative emptiness of most sites. People are enthusiastic about the technology (Java, HTML, and all that stuff) but they don't have anything to say. The Web and the Internet are going to expand, of course, and one direction is toward the massive indices and databases you mention. Another direction is suggested by this idea I have that the Internet is really competing with television for the time and attention of the home computer user. That user is going to demand huge slugs of information and entertainment of the caliber found on commercial television. I'm not being sarcastic here; the Web is, on the whole, less interesting than a single episode of NYPD BLUE. Your mileage may vary.

FROM: Robert Sabella
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 Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828-1023

1996-7-13

As far back as the early 1970s, my music collection was split between vinyl albums and cassettes. I resisted CDs for several years, mostly because I saw no reason to have my collection split three ways. But I always considered cassettes inferior to vinyl albums and, when vinyl mostly disappeared, I was not pleased to have everything on cassette. So about three years ago I reluctantly bought a CD player. Now I have a fairly large collection of CDs, and I buy about three CDs to every one cassette. I have not gone back and replaced my vinyl albums and do not intend to do so. I have two working turntables, and hope to play my albums ad infinitum.

[I forgot to mention it in my diatribe, but one reason I preferred cassettes over vinyl back when was that cassettes can be played in a car; I don't recall that vinyl players could be had dashboard-mounted. My uncle once remarked to me that he could no longer play his vinyls he bought as a teenager in the 1940s because he bought a new turntable which was too sensitive and played every hiss and crackle on his old vinyls, whereas modern vinyl is pressed differently. So it's always something. It now appears that the record companies are trying to replace CDs with DVDs. DVD players will play CDs but CD players cannot play DVDs. This is expected to generate billions for Sony et al, as they soak consumers for the latest equipment. And no doubt DVDs will cost more than CDs, which cost double the price of cassettes.]

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Candi Strecker, Kenneth Knabe, Teddy Harvia, Chester Cuthbert, Harry Andruschak, John Held Jr, Beulah Wadsworth, Henry Welch, Murray Moore, Carolyn Clowes, Buck Coulson, Harry Warner Jr, Stepan Chapman