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OPUNTIA #28

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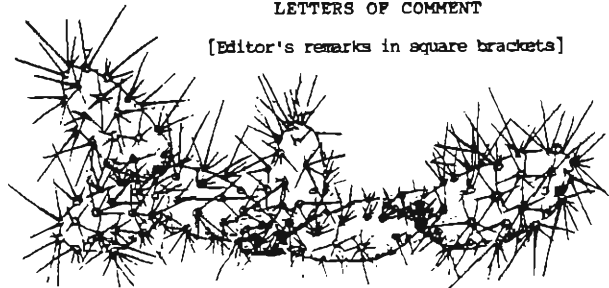
OPUNTIA is published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Available for \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy, trade for your zine, or a letter of comment on the previous issue.

COVER ART: Our Spot-The-Opuntia contest this month is from the ergonomic pen of Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5RQ, England. This time around, contestants are asked to count how many opuntias are in the picture. Winning entries will be quietly ignored as the prize fund ran out due to an unexpected car repair bill.

WORLDWIDE PARTY #3 will be held on June 21 at 21h00 local time. Wherever you are, at that time and date, raise a glass and toast fellow SF fans around the world. The idea is to get a wave circling the planet of fans celebrating the hobby. Benoit Girard and Franz Miklis have done a lot to get this new fannish tradition rolling, so let's see if we can keep it going. What I would like to do is print your account of how you celebrated WWP3 in my next perzine issue so be sure to drop me a line.

CONVERSION 13/CANVENTION 16 goes July 19 to 21, 1996, in Calgary. Membership is \$35 until July 5, from Box 1088, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2K9.

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



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

1996-2-6

The early fans were geeks and misfits not because they read SF, but because they read anything. It just happened to be SF; the kids who read any books at all besides schoolwork (and that under protest) were considered geeks and nerds. Or at least the boys were, and those early fans were mostly boys. Nobody cared if girls read, but boys were supposed to be out being athletic. I'm speaking of the 1930s here, when fandom more or less got started, and I was going from a tot to age 12. If one read and was good at sports, one was considered weird, but tolerated. Otherwise, geekdom. I was going out and shooting rabbits and squirrels for the family table from age 5 on, but my library card proved me a geek, even when I'd never heard of SF.

[Re: Paula Johanson on parent-child SF] Early SF ignored children because it was adventure fiction or problem solving fiction. The hero had to solve the problem and if there was a girl in the story at all, get the girl. Juvenile SF in the 1930s included children, or at least teenagers, but again the emphasis was on the problem

[continued next page]

and outwitting the villain. Romance, much less child begetting, got short shrift because the assumption was that the readers were young males and had no interest in either. Children are in SF now because the readers have grown up. As late as the 1960s, Heinlein was criticized for saying in GLORY ROAD that a man who likese adventure isn't going to stop adventuring just oecause he gets married, something that a lot of brides don't learn until they get hit in the face withit. The audience for real people in SF didn't get started until very recently, and I don't believe is a majority even yet.

FROM: Teddy Harvia 1996-2-5  
701 Regency Drive  
Hurst, Texas 76054-2307

Interesting statistics on fannish physical attributes, but 'nerd' is as often a state of mind. Mainstream-looking individuals can sometimes display backwater behaviour, too.

FROM: Joseph Major 1996-2-6  
3307H River Chase Court  
Louisville, Kentucky 40218-1832

We are seeing nostalgia, sometimes nostalgia without any reference, for old methods of reproduction. I do not notice, by way of contrast, any demands to bring back Addressograph labelling, which used stamped metal plates to print addresses on labels. A change of address meant a new plate. Computer labelling has made such procedures obsolete; I believe that the manufacturer, the Addressograph-Multigraph Corporation, has gone out of business. But the fanatics' authentically mimeographed fanzines, reproed on authentic Twil-tone, are not addressed using Addressograph machines. Why?

FROM: Harry Warner Jr. 1996-2-3  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Your index [to OPUNTIA] is exactly in line with my belief that fan history, indexing, and other research in fandom should be done in small specialized publications which can actually be published and distributed without enormous outlays of time and money. It's unreasonable to hope for monumental reference volumes that take years and years to compile and cost frightening sums to buy after they're published.

[I suspect the future of indexes is on the Internet. I am worried, however, by the quality of the indexing. As I have discovered in indexing OPUNTIA and various aquarium publications, the biggest problem is often setting up a decent group of subject headings and proper cross-referencing. The more I use keyword indexing on computer catalogues, the more I detest it for its failure to bring up useful citations, as opposed to trivial mentions.]

1996-2-9

I've found a new future home for my fanzine collection. You are correct about the potential drawback of donating to an institution, a possible change in policy or interests on the part of the people in charge. However, if a collection is conveyed into private hands, the body attached to that pair of hands is guaranteed to face death sooner or later, while an institution is more likely to survive indefinitely. So there is a hazard in either course of action. I would never sell my fanzine collection or part of it because almost everything in it came to me without charge and it would be wrong to accept money for the results of the amateur spirit. I leave myself a small opening. If my financial situation became so bad that I didn't have enough money to buy food or keep the house warm in winter, and I had nothing

else of value to sell, I would probably accept money for fanzines to stay alive.

Susan Zuege's letter was very good. The NFFF gets a terrible press in fandom, with fanzine mentions of it usually consisting of slurs and putdowns written by individuals who haven't been a member for years and years, if ever, and don't know what they're writing about. I rejoined perhaps 15 years ago and served in a teller capacity for a long while, but lately I've just sat back and watched, on the theory that the organization needs to concentrate on young fans. Its two publications are lively, many of its bureaus provide information and services hard to find in any other fanish organization, and I don't know where in fandom other than the NFFF you'll find round-robin letters.

I keep reading about the vast amount of information available to anyone who has a computer, software, and enough money to pay the hookup and telephone bills. But nowhere have I read an explanation of how a person can know if any particular piece of information obtained via computer is reliable and accurate.

[By co-incidence, a couple of days before I got your letter, I was at the monthly meeting of the Calgary Aquarium Society, where the programme was a demonstration of aquarium groups on the Internet. One of the club members brought along a computer and went live on the net, hooking up to rec.aquaria, aquarium club home pages on the WWW, and such. A show of hands revealed that about 25% of CAS members present were on the net. Interestingly, most of the questions had nothing to do with hardware or software. One of the most vigorously discussed questions was how reliable fishkeeping info on the net is. The agreed answer was that it depends on 'brand name', that is, the reputation of the person editing the home page or writing on Usenet. Big names who regularly win awards at aquarium shows, collect fish in habitat, or published learned refereed articles

will be seriously listened to, while loud-mouthed neos with no track record will have difficulty attracting sustained attention. This is how things are currently done via aquarium magazines. I suspect that all other activities will settle on this method as well. There will always be a need for editors.]

I enjoyed Paula Johanson's article, particularly for the assurance that some children in fantasy and SF do more inventive things than simply rebelling against their parents and running away from them at the first opportunity. I believe a long-term survey would show the parent-child factor appeared more frequently in the field a long time ago than it has done in the more immediate past. Stories that come to mind are Dr. David Keller's "The Lost Language" and "Life Everlasting", some of Heinlein's juveniles, the Kuttner-Moore "Mimsy Were The Borogoves", Morley's "Thunder On The Left", Stapledon's "Odd John", and many another.

FROM: Rodney Leighton

1996-2-9

R.R. 3

Pugwash, Nova Scotia B0K 1L0

DUFF, CUFF, SNUFF, FLUFF. Sheesh! Next thing you know, there will be more fan funds than there are fanzines. The winners of these things never write trip reports. Dick and Leah Smith were so appalled at the prospect of publishing one that they abandoned publishing entirely. In any event, it would appear that Lloyd Penney will get to go to Calgary for free.

[Unfortunately, the Penneys are hosting a relaxicon in Brampton the same weekend as Convention, which throws the CUFF race wide open. Any contenders? The failure of fan fund winners to publish trip reports is not as bad as all that, but certainly enough to turn off marginal supporters of fan funds who expect a report for their money.]

FROM: Joseph Nicholas  
15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham  
London N15 4JU, England

1996-2-22

With reference to your statistical survey in OPUNTIA #27, I suspect that SF fans have a tendency to greater rotundity not because they eat well, but because they eat badly. Snack and processed foods are high in calories but take less time to prepare than a proper meal, which would take time away from reading, gawping at the tube, or surfing the Internet. And because they take less exercise, if they take any exercise at all, although the tendency to rotundity seems less marked in the UK than in (especially) the USA, where portions served when one eats out are much larger. Apart from hiding multiple chins, the incidence of beards amongst fans may be higher because they're so busy reading when they get out of bed in the morning that they don't have time to shave!

FROM: Sheryl Birkhead  
23629 Woodfield Road  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20882

1996-2-22

Really like the Harvia covers; hope a lot more are coming.

About facial hair: do guys really grow more beards when on vacation +/- winter/summer? Take your pick: I personally would figure more beards in winter but if vacations match with summer, perhaps ... If this is true, then maybe convention numbers are skewed by non-fandom factors. If you trade with SF clubs, perhaps they can take a quick survey at a meeting to give you more data.

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

1996-1-28

The index issues (OPUNTIA 26.2) are always useful, even if the only fanzine in the index is OPUNTIA. I guess it would be great if someone would do an index of various subjects for various fanzines, but who'd do it? We can barely keep up with what zines come out, let alone what is in them. All knowledge is contained in fanzines, but sifting out what you want is another thing.

[Don Fitch of Covina, California, was indexing fanzines. I'd do others, but I really don't have the time, or more importantly, complete runs of the better zines. Anyone who tries to do a proper subject index of FOSFAX, for example, would be like the chap who wanted to do a bibliography of Isaac Asimov.]

If NonCon is to become a western Canadian regional con, it might be an idea to check how other regional cons manage themselves. In the past, fans have discussed a regional con for the east of Canada, but the idea was deemed unworkable because of the lack of large numbers of attendees, lack of money, surfeit of geography, and lack of regional awareness of fandom. Most people here aren't even aware of what else is happening in their own city, let alone the rest of the province or country. I wonder if the West would fare any better.

[Since NonCon involves little more than adding an extra panel or two, and possibly subtitling the regular name of the con, there is little sacrifice involved. Most cons out here are about 500 attendance, almost all local, as John Mansfield is about the only fan who regularly travels to all the cons (and he's retired).]

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Harry Andruschak, Taral Wayne, Murray Moore, Chester Cuthbert, Billy Dinwoodie, Henry Welch, Tim Jones.

## TELEGRAPH FANDOM AND T-ZINES

by Dale Speirs

In the zine APPARATCHIK #54, I had loded the editor Andy Hooper about what life was like on the Internet. Not having a computer of my own, I wanted to know if there was a separate SF fandom for e-mailers. Andy's reply was that people cannot be distinguished as being in one category only. Zine pubbers do con-running and e-mailers read books. Andy wrote: "The way I think about the net is this: It's a system that allows me to send telegrams anywhere in the world for free. Anyone who has the wire and the right glorified morse key in their home can send telegrams right back. And the telegram can be of any length, too. Nice though this is, I am unlikely to begin identifying more closely with the people who send me telegrams than the people who I get to see face to face ...".

Fair enough comment from Andy, and taken as read. It wasn't until the next day that the thought occurred to me about how fandom might have developed in an alternative universe where telegrams were used as a paper form of e-mail. Suppose that in the 1930s and 1940s, telegrams were the equivalent of today's e-mail. In this alternative timeline, one could send a telegram of any length for a few pennies, and to any place in the world without long-distance charges. If you couldn't afford your own machine, you'd go down to the telegraph office and send your paper-e-mail (yes, an oxymoron) from there, and perhaps telegraphzines if you didn't mind the telegraph operator knowing your business.

In the t-zine universe, computers still held to our timeline development, with no practical home use until the 1980s. This results in paper-e-mail networks not having search engines, ftp sites, newsgroups, Web home pages or any other response capability. T-zines go to readers via a mailing list that allows the pubber to

type up copy once, then push a button to send it simultaneously to as many people as required. Readers, however, cannot dial in to a machine and prompt it to send out a t-zine copy, as might be done with a Webpage. Punch tape/punch card technology exists in the t-zine universe, so a zine pubber can record a zine and reprint it as required. Such zines are limited to text and ASCII art. Ordinary zines produced by offset or other printing methods still exist because they have the advantage of proper artwork and photographs.

Life in the t-zine zone would be a mixture of life in our zine universe. Spamming doesn't bother people any more than junk mail bothers us. One doesn't pay for received telegrams and t-zines, and the paper is always useful in starting the fireplace. Hackers can't sneak into files via the wires and alter them; they have to physically enter the owner's house and switch punch cards or splice paper tape. Recipients can't abuse copyright laws since they would have to retype a t-zine rather than push a button and commit it to disk.

T-zines would have to be traded the same as the Papernet of our world. Trades are published on demand; as long as you have the control tape or punch cards you can just run them through the telegraph again, and to as many or as few addresses desired. The latter would raise complaints about exclusions and cliques, just as some fans in our universe are miffed that they don't get a particular zine despite requests.

One could also imagine a faxzine universe on the same lines of unlimited content at pennies per transmission. Alexander Bain invented the fax machine in 1842, although image quality problems and cost delayed widespread use until 1925, when AT&T started wirephoto service for newspapers. Even then, equipment was bulky and expensive, slow (5-7 minutes/image), and affected by poor telephone lines. Japan was the leader in faxing because its language is not suitable for text typing.

## ZINES: AN EO-HISTORY

by Ken Faig Jr.

(for Vic and Rowena Moitoret, two sterling amateur journalists)

It would be pretty pretentious to start a history of amateur magazines with landmarks in human history like the invention of writing and of moveable type, so I won't.

The spread of literacy and of printed material facilitated by the mercantile revolution is probably the proximate starting point for the history of amateur magazines. Because of illiteracy and the expense of scribes and writing materials, written communication between common people was very rare in prior ages. Few matters not involving popes, emperors, or nobles were recorded in written form, and only the tireless labour of the medieval monks kept classical learning alive. In the 17th century, we see the first explosion of popular chapbooks and broadsides intended for the general reading public. With the invention of steam printing, the mass manufacture of cheap (but regrettably fragile) paper, and improved public education, the opportunities for exposure of common people to literary endeavour improved dramatically in the early decades of the 19th century.

In some ways, I think personal correspondence has a lot to do with the beginning of zines. Both amateur magazines and personal correspondence are essentially forms of self-expression directed to others without expectation of payment. From the 18th century forward, reliable postal service came within the reach of larger numbers of people. Improved literacy and the increased production of paper and writing implements also fostered increased correspondence. In many ways, personal correspondence was the seed bed of amateur journalism. Later amateur journalists were often proud of the amount of mail which they received, often exceeding

that of nearby businesses, much to the distress of their local mail carriers. H.P. Lovecraft is estimated to have written over 100,000 letters in less than 25 years of amateur literary activity, perhaps rivalling even great 18th-century correspondents like Voltaire and Sir Horace Walpole.

The round-robin letter, or circulator, is probably very ancient. H.P. Lovecraft belonged to one called Transatlantic Circulator, because it had members on both sides of the Atlantic. His famous "In Defense of Dagon" essays, circulated in manuscript, managed to return to him (and are today preserved in the HPL collection at Brown University), but his serial thriller "The Mystery of Murdon Grange", also passed through the Circulator, seems to have perished. Some of the smaller apas still operate on a round-robin basis. Regrettably, the nuisance chain letter has largely supplanted the once-popular round-robin in the consciousness of the general public.

Periodicals prior to the 18th century were mostly the journals of scholarly or learned societies, but by the mid-18th century more popular periodicals, appealing to the wealthy mercantile and landed classes, began to appear. With the invention of the steam press, there was all manner of inexpensive popular literature to inspire youthful imitation. The heyday of the popular fiction magazine was probably about 1890-1910; that of the dime novel, probably somewhat earlier. With the invention of radio and television, and the depredations of two world wars on printed material, the reading habit has suffered in the 20th century.

Many great writers created so-called 'manuscript magazines' in their youth, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Robert Louis Stevenson, to name only two. The Brontes created an entire world of minutely-written juvenile fiction. One of the world's largest collections of amateur magazines may be found at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. Their collection contains a

number of examples of 19th-century manuscript magazines, designed for circulation among family and friends. The only way to create multiple copies of such manuscript magazines was the sheer monkish labour of copying by hand. The American polymath president Thomas Jefferson was no amateur journalist, but at Monticello you can see a machine he invented to make copies of his letters while he wrote them.

If one's definition of an amateur magazine extends to any magazine edited by a minor, the earliest printed amateur magazines produced in North America seem to have been John Howard Payne's *THE SPIAN MIRROR* (1805-06) and Thomas Gray Condie's *JUVENILE PORT-FOLIO, AND LITERARY MISCELLANY* (1812-16). The American Antiquarian Society collection has a partial run of the first title and a full run of the second.

The next major step in the creation of amateur magazines was the invention of cheaper forms of reproduction so that amateur magazines could be created in larger numbers. The cheap hand press, retailing for \$20 or less, was the first to arrive, about the 1850s. Before long, youthful printers were expanding from small job printing (business cards and the like) to editing and publishing their own small magazines. Most of these small magazines originally tried to operate on a commercial basis, but eventually the habit of exchange with fellow amateur editors took hold.

For those amateur editors not able or willing to purchase their own printing equipment, both amateur and commercial printers filled the bill with inexpensive printing. Soon, hundreds of youths were editing and printing amateur magazines. Even President Grant ordered a printing press for his son Jesse Root Grant (1858-1934) from the White House in 1869.

The typical edition of an amateur magazine was from

100 to 300 copies, although numerous exceptions of smaller or larger press runs exist. The format of amateur magazines ranged from the tiny thumbnail magazines favoured by the owners of the smallest hand presses to large bedsheet-sized publications. Frequency of publication was often irregular. Laurie A. Sawyer stated in the colophon of her *NEWS NOTES* (1905) that it was published "when, where and as she pleases". A few magazines sustained a weekly or even daily publication schedule for a limited period; 'Doc' Swift was famous for keeping up a weekly publication schedule for an extended period.

The tradition of publishing special magazines at conventions was much cherished. Titles of amateur magazines were as individualized as their editors. Male editors predominated from the beginning, but there was always a significant admixture of females. A Young Women's Amateur Press Association was founded as early as 1884. Most titles arrived and vanished within a few years; others, like C.W. Smith's *THE TRYOUT*, went on for decades.

The desire to organize was soon felt. There were several early, only partially successful attempts, but the celebration of the centennial of the USA in Philadelphia in 1876 paved the way for a nationwide gathering of amateur journalists. They formed the National Amateur Press Association, the grand-daddy of all the apas and still flourishing today, and elected John Winslow Snyder their first president. Organized amateur journalism had been born.

Not until later on did most apas operate on the bundle system. Originally, the function of the Official Editor was to publish an official journal whose primary purpose was to print official announcements and to record all the magazines he received. Individual amateur journalists exchanged their magazines one-on-one with others. Eventually the bundle system, used by most apas today,

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replaced the older practice. Reduced expense and fewer hurt feelings were the primary motivating factors favouring the adoption of the bundle system.

Amateur press associations and politics burgeoned during the last quarter of the 19th century. Although sometimes ephemeral, local clubs and regional associations flourished. Notable examples of long-lived local clubs were Boston's Hub Club, which flourished for thirty years under the guidance of Edith Miniter, and, later on, New York's Blue Pencil Club, which contained many members of the Lovecraft Circle like James F. Morton Jr. and Rhinehart Kleiner. Most amateur journalists spent only a few years in the hobby, but a notable few spent an entire lifetime. Names like 'Tryout' Smith, 'Pop' Mellinger, 'Doc' Swift, and Tim Thrift, to name only a few, are still known even to today's amateur journalists.

The American Antiquarian Society collection contains over 50,000 amateur journals dating to 1900 and prior, and the Library of Amateur Journalism, originally assembled by Edwin Hadley Smith and maintained by the Fossils, the alumni association of amateur journalism, in Stayton, Oregon, even more. The Library of Amateur Journalism collects not only the sterling rarities of yesteryear but also the amateur magazines of today. The Fossils help keep alive an interest in the history of the amateur journalism hobby.

Participants in the hobby of amateur journalism have ranged from serious students of literature to young men and women more interested in its social aspects and politics. Battles for electoral office were hard fought, and many schisms and offshoot societies resulted. Some amateur journalists became lay experts in parliamentary procedure, and a few like George Julian Houtain and Walter H. Thorpe were even lawyers in their own right.

During their heyday, amateur conventions were known for long and tangled debates over proposed constitutional amendments and procedural questions. On a happier note, many amateur journalists over the years have met their spouses through the hobby. During the conventions there were often one or more convention brides at the gatherings.

Social activities were never lacking, with banquets, toasts, group photographs, and excursions being among the most beloved traditions. After helping me proofread Edith Miniter's GOING HOME AND OTHER AMATEUR WRITINGS (Moshassuck Press, 1995), my wife commented that amateur journalists always seemed to be either talking or eating. Sometimes precious little sleeping did occur over convention weekends. I have attended only a very few SF conventions, but I suspect similar things happen.

Convention ribbons and badges, autographed menu cards and group photographs were among the most treasured of amateur relics, next to amateur magazines themselves. Old-time amateurs prided themselves on being able to identify everyone in those packed group photographs. A sampling of these wonderful relics may be found in Truman J. Spencer's THE HISTORY OF AMATEUR JOURNALISM (see reading list).

The United Amateur Press Association was founded in 1895 by a group of young men dissatisfied with the National and its policies. The United itself split in 1912 and it was into the Helene Hoffman Cole faction of the United that young H.P. Lovecraft was recruited in 1914. Lovecraft came to the attention of amateur recruiter Edward F. Daas, based on his lively participation in the reader's column of THE ARGOSY in 1913-14.

The circle centered on Edith Miniter (1867-1934), and Boston's Hub Club did not desert the National after the proxy scandal at the 1902 New York National convention,

but founded their own, more literarily inclined Interstate Amateur Press Association in 1903. The Interstate lasted less than a decade, but the National forgave Edith and elected her its first female president in 1909.

In a way, young H.P. Lovecraft had been an amateur journalist long before his discovery by organized amateur journalism. As a boy of eight years, he was fascinated by chemistry, and on March 4, 1899, commenced publication of a manuscript magazine entitled THE SCIENTIFIC GAZETTE. Amazingly enough, he kept it up for eight years, eventually switching to a hectograph for reproduction, and adding THE RHODE ISLAND JOURNAL OF ASTRONOMY to his publication list. The Brown University HPL collection has an extensive collection of these juvenile publications, all lovingly preserved by the publisher. Lovecraft collectors need not despair though, for the author also sent sample issues to correspondents, and doubtless some will eventually make their way to the literary marketplace. Once there, they're likely to be as sought-for as issues of Ray Bradbury's early fanzine FUTURIA FANTASIA.

The increasing price of paper and printing exercised pressure on the hobby of amateur journalism as the 20th century moved forward. A larger and larger proportion of amateur journalists seemed to consist of gainfully-employed adults who could afford to spend significant sums of money on their hobby. A few nostalgic oldtimers like Edwin Hadley Smith felt that the hobby ought to be returned to the young men and women, the boy and girl editors, who had founded it. But eventually the idea that amateur journalism should be open to all who wished to participate prevailed. Controversy long waxed over whether the occupant of the official editorship ought to subsidize the official organ or not.

Amateur magazines reproduced by newer, less expensive methods than the printing press began to be seen. The

revolution in late 19th and early 20th century business machines benefited penny-pinching amateur journalists, and soon a minority of magazines reproduced by spirit duplicator and by mimeograph began to be seen amongst the printed titles. The hectograph and the typewritten carbon-copy magazine still provided a starting point for many of the youngest, most inexperienced, and least well-financed amateurs.

The science fiction fans of the 1930s and later, most of whom started their fan careers as poorly-financed youths, eagerly adopted the new, less expensive methods of duplication. Many built their own duplicating machines or reconditioned used office models. Whole cults were built around the intricacies of various methods of duplication. Each era had its masters of mimeography and hectography, and many longstanding friendships were built around the long hours of labour at the duplicating machine and at the collating table.

Just about every office duplicating machine eventually found its way into the hands of fans and amateur journalists. Later, well-financed fans bought expensive power-driven machines and had strong brand-name loyalties. Gestetner and A.B. Dick were well-known makes. Pioneer Canadian fan Nils Helmer Frome used an office machine called a multigraph, acquired from fellow fan C. Hamilton Bloomer Jr., to produce SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES, the first Canadian SF fanzine. I've often felt that a good history of office duplicating machines might have much to offer the historian of fandom and amateur journalism. [Editor's note: Let me recommend THE ORIGIN OF STENCIL DUPLICATING by W.B. Proudfoot, published 1972 by Hutchinson & Co., London. Despite its title, it also deals with the history of carbon paper, typewriters, and the hectograph.] So much has the situation changed today that spirit duplicator paper is no longer manufactured and even mimeograph supplies and replacement parts are becoming more difficult to obtain.

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Just as the letter columns of the great fiction magazines like THE ARGOSY were fertile sources of recruitment for amateur journalism, the letter columns of the SF magazines published in the 1920s and later provided a meeting place for fans of that particular genre. Soon, local clubs were organized and amateur publications began to appear. In the beginning, some SF fans had ties with organized amateur journalism as it then existed, and Lovecraft recruited many of his own circle of young fans into the National.

During his 1935 trip to Florida, Lovecraft helped his young friend and fellow amateur journalist R.H. Barlow set type for Barlow's NAPA magazine THE DRAGON-FLY and for other publications of Barlow's small Dragon-Fly Press, including the scarce edition of Frank Belknap Long's poetry collection, THE GOBLIN TOWER. Friends of Lovecraft like W. Paul Cook, Frank Belknap Long, Herman C. Koenig, R.H. Barlow, and Duane W. Rimel participated both in organized amateur journalism and in SF fandom.

The constitutions of the existing amateur press associations helped SF fans formulate the constitution of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association in 1937. There have always been some crossover members between organized amateur journalism and science fandom, including in addition to members of the Lovecraft Circle, later amateurs like William H. Grovesman, Helen (Vivarttas) Wesson, and Martin M. Horvat. But with the first WorldCon in 1939, SF fandom and its magazines were launched on their own path, which has been better chronicled elsewhere.

Some amateur journalists like W. Paul Cook were printers in their own right, and maintained a high standard of printing and publication design. Amateur magazines like Hyman Bradofsky's THE CALIFORNIAN and Tim Thrift's and Ernest A. Edkin's THE AONIAN were really nothing

less than finely printed and edited literary journals, produced by gifted and adequately financed editors who also happened to be amateur journalists. Some amateur printers even had connections with the private press movement begun by luminaries like Sir Horace Walpole (Strawberry Hill Press) and William Morris (Kelmscott Press). There remains a considerable segment of organized amateur journalism interested in fine presswork.

W. Paul Cook had a printer's contempt for humbler forms of reproduction, and was livid when young R.H. Barlow saw fit to print Edith Minter's "Dead Houses" in his mimeographed magazine LEAVES in 1938. Letterpress work has always been rare in SF fandom, although Conrad Ruppert printed early amateur magazines like THE FANTASY FAN and FANTASY MAGAZINE in the 1930s. Today, letterpress amateur magazines have become increasingly rare; Ralph Babcock's THE SCARLET COCKEREL and Bill Danner's STEPFANTASY are notable survivors in organized amateur journalism and SF fandom, respectively. Today, the computer revolution has changed everything, and even the veriest neofans have at their command a range of fonts which the professional printer of yesteryear could not have rivalled. Now, if we can only acquire even a modicum of the layout and design skills of those printers of yesteryear, we will be set!

The real question today is whether self-expression in cyberspace is going to replace the hardcopy amateur magazine. For myself, an old curmudgeon who still owns his first (and only) hand-cranked spirit duplicator, I hope this will be a long time in happening. To say nothing of the unequalled convenience of a book or magazine for reading, virtually anytime or anywhere, there is a feel about printed paper, however humble its contents may be, that stirs the heartstrings of anyone who loves to read and to write.

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Another downside of the cyber era is diminished personal contacts. While SF conventions like the WorldCon have mushroomed to gargantuan proportions, they have grown more and more impersonal and focussed on the professional side of the field. On the other hand, conventions of organized amateur journalists have diminished in numbers, but for the survivors there is more camaraderie and less politicking and jockeying for position. Filling amateur offices today is often more a matter of finding an able and willing volunteer than of choosing between rival candidates.

An occasional contested election still occurs. The memories of the thrown-out proxies of the 1902 National contest still haven't entirely faded, and the proxies of qualified voters absent from the convention are scrupulously counted. Edith Minitzer, who was so enraged by the political maneuvering which deprived John Leary Peltret of the presidency at the 1902 National convention in New York, would probably look down smiling at the smaller, friendlier amateur conventions of recent years. She always enjoyed the social aspects of amateur journalism, but admitted to accepting new acquaintances to her circle of friends "on suspicion".

Most amateur editors treasure the relics of their hobby long after they have left it, but the usual fate of amateur magazines upon the death of the original owner has been the scrap heap or the furnace. How wonderful it would be to find an aggressive young institutional librarian, with thousands of feet of shelf space, who would covenant to catalogue and keep every non-duplicate amateur journal contributed to his collection. What a wonderful treasure he would secure to future generations!

So much then, for the eo-history of the zine. The most important thing is that you, the amateur editor of today, make your own zine the very best you can. If you do, you will avoid brickbats and squabbles, and

each issue mark an improvement over the last. Keep your zine within the budget and the amount of time you can afford to allocate to your hobby, and perhaps it will produce years of pleasure, rather than eventually becoming a non-remunerative and burdensome labour which you (and perhaps your family) will long to abandon. Think of all the wonderful memories you will have looking over your box of zines when the time comes to clean the garage or attic in some future year. Be their destiny the shelves of an institutional library or the scrap heap, they will have been yours. Think then too, of those young men and women from 100 years ago, all long gone now, who had all the same aspirations and felt the same thrill at seeing their own work in print. I think their ghosts are looking over your shoulders as you sit at your keyboards today.

I would love to own a file of Lovecraft's amateur magazine THE CONSERVATIVE (1915-23). Or to find that first issue of THE CINCINNATI AMATEUR (1884) containing "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece", Edith Minitzer's debut in amateur journalism. Or to stumble across THE WEBSTER AMATEUR, which Edith and her husband John Minitzer published when they owned the weekly newspaper THE WORCESTER COUNTY NEWS in Webster, Massachusetts, in 188-89. It's doubtful that any issues of their weekly newspaper survive, let alone of the amateur magazine they printed one week on its presses. I suspect I will never own or even see most of these items. Of some amateur magazines doubtless no earthly trace remains. Only the human spirit which created them, in the joy of self-expression, still endures, and will endure, as long as the human race itself.

[Ken Faig Jr. can be reached at 2311 Swainwood Drive, Glenview, Illinois 60025-2741. His reading list for this article follows on the next page.]

## Reading List

### Institutional Collections:

Amateur Journalism Collection, American Antiquarian Society, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01609. Curator is Dennis R. Laurie. Over 50,000 pre-1900 items, carefully catalogued. This is a research library mostly used by academic scholars. You have to have a bonafide research project to use it. The collection was greatly enriched through the generosity of Edward H. Cole.

Library of Amateur Journalism, 112 East Burnett Street, Stayton, Oregon 97383. Curator is Martin M. Horvat. Organized by year of publication. 19th and 20th century material. Maintained by The Fossils Inc., the alumni organization of amateur journalists. Originally assembled by Edwin Hadley Smith.

### Books And Articles:

Mainstream zines and organized amateur journalism.

Truman J. Spencer, THE HISTORY OF AMATEUR JOURNALISM, New York, The Fossils, 1957. The one indispensable reference on organized amateur journalism. Now out of print but available in many institutional libraries. Impeccably edited and produced, printed and bound in Japan while Sheldon Wesson was stationed there. Lots of fine period illustrations. An index to this work compiled by Nita Gerner Smith and Nelson G. Morton was published separately by The Fossils in 1959.

Truman J. Spencer, ed., A CYCLOPEDIA OF THE LITERATURE OF AMATEUR JOURNALISM, Hartford, Connecticut, published by the editor, 1891. An over 500 page compendium of the best of amateur literature through the date of compilation.

John Travis Nixon, HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION, Crowley, Louisiana, published by the author, 1900. A 350-page treatise.

H.P. Lovecraft, LOOKING BACKWARD, Haverhill, Massachusetts, publ. by C.W. 'Tryout' Smith, circa 1920. 40-copy offprint from 1920 serialization in THE TRYOUT. Later reprinted in THE AONTIAN (1944) and as a separate brochure, Necronomicon Press, 1980. An historical memoir of amateur journalism in the 1880s.

Ralph W. Babcock, ed., YOUR THOUGHTS, Stayton, Oregon, The Fossils, 1983. Another 500-page compendium of amateur writing. Provides a real flavour of the contents of more recent amateur magazines through facsimile reproduction. I believe that unbound copies may still be available from Martin M. Horvat, c/o Library of Amateur Journalism.

Dennis R. Laurie, "Amateur Journalism", COLLECTIBLE NEWSPAPERS, April 1988, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp 5-8. Excellent illustrated article on 19th-century amateur magazines, with reproductions of magazines from the collection of the American Antiquarian Society.

Elizabeth Harris, THE BOY AND HIS PRESS, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, 1992. Catalogue of an exhibit of small printing presses and amateur magazines at the National Museum of American History. Well-illustrated. The exhibit has ended, but I believe the catalogue is still in print.

Science fiction zines and fandom.

Sam Moskowitz, THE IMMORTAL STORM, Westport, Connecticut, Hyperion Press, 1974. Reprint of original 1954 ASFO edition. The canonical history of the 1930s, its fans and zines.

Harry Warner Jr., ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, Chicago, Illinois Advent Publ., 1969. Ditto for the 1940s. Handsomely produced, lots of good period illustrations.

Harry Warner Jr., A WEALTH OF FABLE, Van Nuys, California, SCIFI Press, 1992. Ditto for the 1950s.

[Editor's note: I have heard that Dick Lynch is working on the history of the 1960s.]

Jack Speer, UP TO NOW, Arcturus Press, Brooklyn, New York, 1994. A more humorous look at 1930s fandom. Reprint of 1938 edition.

Francis T. Laney, AH! SWEET IDIOCY!, Los Angeles, California, Francis Laney and Charles Burbee, 1948. Originally circulated in FAPA. Laney's autobiographical memoir of his life as a SF fan, from his early days as a Lovecraft fan (and publisher of THE ACOLYTE) to his later intense involvement in Los Angeles fandom. Marred by ad hominem criticisms. There have been several subsequent small reprint editions published by fans.

John Robert Colombo, ed., YEARS OF LIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF LESLIE A. CROUTCH, Toronto, Hounslow Press, 1982. Handsomely produced and well-illustrated. An inspiring compilation and commentary on one of Canada's pioneer fans, Leslie A. Crutch (1915-1969) of Parry Sound, Ontario. Crutch had a long, happy, and productive career as a SF fan. LIGHT was the name of his fanzine.

Sam Moskowitz, ed., HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT AND NILS HELMER FROME, Glenview, Illinois, Moshassuck Press, 1989. Similar compilation covering the career of another pioneer Canadian fan, Nils Helmer Frome (1918-1962) of Fraser Mills, British Columbia. Spiral-bound with photographs and other illustrations reproduced by photocopying.

Damon Knight, THE FUTURIANS, New York, John Day, 1977. New York area fan politics from the 1930s through the 1950s, centered on the Futurians. Has appearances by many of the leading authors in the field.

Joe Sanders, ed., SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1994. Essays on many aspects of SF fandom, including zines and apas.

Bob Pavlat and Bill Evans, FANZINE INDEX, Hyattsville, Maryland, Bob Pavlat, appeared in FAPA in five installments (dated December 1952, January 1955, February 1958, August 1958, and November 1959). Pavlat and Evans were copublishers of the first two installments. The publication record of SF fanzines through the 1950s, based in part on earlier-published work by pioneer bibliographer R.D. Swisher. Still available from Robert A. Madle, 4406 Bestor Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20853.

#### Resources:

Organized amateur journalism.

THE NATIONAL AMATEUR. The quarterly official organ of the National Amateur Press Association, the oldest of the surviving organized amateur journalism associations. The 1995-96 secretary-treasurer is Gale Sheldon, 972 Wakefield Court, El Cajon, California 90020-2094. A year's subscription to THE NATIONAL AMATEUR currently (1996) costs \$8. Annual dues for the National Amateur Press Association are currently \$15 and include THE NATIONAL AMATEUR; there is also an activity requirement.

THE FOSSIL. The quarterly magazine of The Fossils, the alumni organization of amateur journalism. The 1995-96 secretary-treasurer is Joseph A. Diachenko, 9217 Mimosa Drive, LaPlata, Maryland 20646. Annual dues for The

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Fossils are currently \$15 and include THE FOSSIL. No activity requirement, although in recent years The Fossils have been generating keepsake bundles of their own.

A number of other organized amateur press associations (other than specialized apas like the Fantasy Amateur Press Association and the Esoteric Order of Dagon Amateur Press Association) still exist, including notably the United Amateur Press Association, the United Amateur Press Association of America, and the American Amateur Press Association. The National is the largest. I apologize that I do not have information to provide regarding all of them; no disrespect is intended. To make my own loyalties clear, I am a member of The Fossils (1995+) and of the Esoteric Order of Dagon Amateur Press Association (1973+). I am a veteran of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (1976-91) and the Necronomicon Amateur Press Association (1976-87).

Science fiction fandom.

Robert A. Madle, 4406 Bestor Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20853. The best bookseller source for the above-cited books on SF fandom. A veteran fan himself, Madle has a chapter on pre-WW2 fandom in Joe Sanders' book SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM.

There have been a number of fanzines specializing in fan history, notably Joe D. Siclari's FANHISTORICA, which originally published Harry Warner's A WEALTH OF FABLE in a three-volume mimeographed edition. The best way to locate fanzines covering fan history is through fans with similar interests.

[Editor's note: The Timebinders, an on-line fanhistory group, can be contacted via Faye Manning, Fan History Amateur Press Association, 4056 Southway Loop, Springfield, Oregon 97478-5928.]

THE BIRTH OF CARBON PAPER AND OTHER MOMENTS ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
by Dale Speirs

As netizens wax ecstatic about the approach of transparent interfaces, the Singularity, and computer utopia in general, it is well to look at the last time there was a revolution in communications technology. From the middle 1800s to WW1, there was a upheaval much like the present times, starting off slowly, gradually building up to a climax amidst shouting by neo-Luddites, prophecy by the revolutionary underground, and finally pre-emption by the Establishment.

If you want to win an easy bet, ask people when hand-copying died out. Most will say about the 1400s or 1500s as the printing press spread from country to country. In fact, hand copying on a large scale lasted until about the 1890s, and in some cases to the 1950s (in law courts of England). Printing by letterpress was only used for books and periodicals; it was not practical for business letters or ledger accounts. Copy clerks were cheap and plentiful, and widely employed by businesses until the late 1800s.

The definitive account of how carbon paper, typewriters, and duplicating machines evolved in the late 1800s is by W.B. Proudfoot, entitled THE ORIGIN OF STENCIL DUPLICATION (Hutchinson, 1972). Proudfoot was a retired employee of the Gestetner company, and his book largely deals with the times of David Gestetner, but he also has an excellent historical account of other office technologies. Like today's computer systems, the components of 1800s technology did not evolve in isolation from each other. Carbon paper failed until the typewriter arrived in 1873. Hectographs struggled until the invention of aniline inks in 1856 and the importation of long-fibre paper from Japan circa 1868.

Copy clerks in businesses generally wrote every letter twice; once for the addressee, and once for the files. About the middle 1800s, as inks improved, various methods of pressing transparent paper against a fresh-written letter were developed. The transparent paper absorbed ink from the original letter, producing a mirror image that could be read through the back of the paper.

Ralph Wedgwood, an impoverished descendent of the pottery maker, was granted a patent for ink-soaked paper called carbonic or carbonated paper, essentially a double-sided carbon paper. In use, the top copy of a letter was transparent paper, then carbonated paper, then regular paper. One wrote with a metal stylus and kept the transparent copy, sending out the bottom copy as the 'original'. The Wedgwood method was sold to the general public through the 1800s.

Stateside, Cyrus Dakin began selling one-sided carbon paper as early as 1823, but the only customer was the Associated Press. In 1868 at Cincinnati, Ohio, the AP was covering a balloon ascent by a biscuit manufacturer named Lebbeus Rogers. As he was being interviewed by the reporter in the AP offices, he noticed the use of the carbon papers. He was so excited about the possibility of selling carbon paper to businesses that he gave up both balloons and biscuits, and went into the carbon paper trade full-time. Like most, his carbon papers were held back by the fact that they tore easily. Use of carbon paper was generally for receipt books and bills of lading; it was too much trouble to write out a letter without any tearing. In 1873, Rogers attended the first demonstration of a practical typewriter, held at the offices of E. Remington & Sons. He persuaded the typist to try out his carbon papers. The tryout was a success, and typewriters and carbon papers were henceforth linked together in commercial use.

In the 1870s, the limitation of one copy per original by transparent paper was frustrating. The hectograph was a way around it, by pressing the original onto a slab of gelatin to leave a well-inked mirror image, then pressing sheets of ordinary paper against the slab to make up to 100 copies, although 50 copies was about the normal limit. (See OPUNTIA 24:10-13 for a more detailed history of the hectograph.) Carbon paper in a typewriter is only good for a few copies at a time, as opposed to 50 to 100 for a hectograph, so the two technologies were used together.

Stencil duplicating had to wait for the introduction of long-fibred paper about 1868. This paper was porous but strong. Most duplicating methods worked by coating the long-fibred paper with wax on one side. A stylus or, in later years, the typewriter, was used to write a message on the wax side, which pushed aside the wax and exposed the paper below. Typewriters were much better for this, as they struck the wax with even pressure and did not clog with wax. The completed stencil was then put in some kind of press bed, whether flat or rotary, with the copy paper on one side of the stencil. The ink was then spread on the machine, and as the press operated, it went through the letters and left an impression on the copy paper. Stencil duplicators were easier to handle than pouring slabs of gelatin, so the hectograph disappeared from offices, although it was still used by impoverished zinc publishers and political revolutionaries. The latter liked hectographs because the secret police could not arrest them for possession of a few packets of gelatin and a cake pan, whereas possession of a press would result in imprisonment.

As inks improved, so did duplicators, and in turn better paper could be fed through the duplicators. This is similar to what is now occurring in the race between computer hardware and software; both improve together.