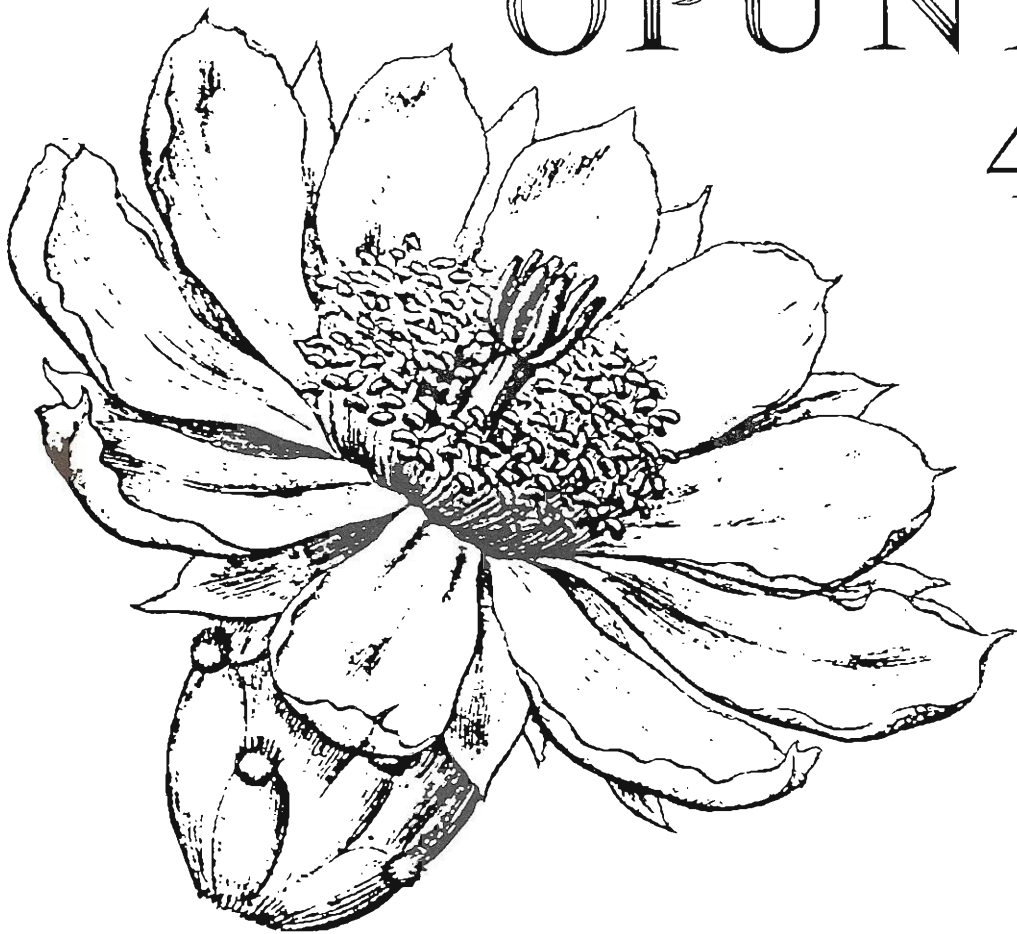


OPUNTIA

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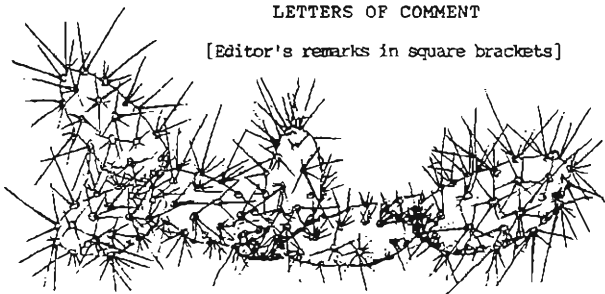
[Editor's remarks in square brackets]

OPUNTIA is published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 2E7. Available for \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy, zine trade, or letter of comment on a previous issue. Whole-numbered issues are sercon, .1 issues are reviewzines, .2 issues are indexes, and .5 issues are perzines.

ART CREDIT: The cover depicts a flower of Opuntia chlorotica, artist unknown, from Volume 4 of REPORTS OF EXPLORATIONS AND SURVEYS TO ASCERTAIN THE MOST PRACTICABLE AND ECONOMICAL ROUTE FOR A RAILROAD FROM THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN (1853-4), published in 1856 by the American Congress.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Jay Harber, Ruel Gaviola, Chester Cuthbert, Harry Andruschak, Ken Faig Jr, Bruce Pelz, Rich Mackin, Peter Stinson, John Held Jr, Scott Crow, Rodney Leighton, Larry Angelo, Karen Johnson, Michael Dittman, Ned Brooks, Sheryl Birkhead, Cliff Kennedy, Michael Waite, Robert Lichtman

THIS JUST IN: The newsletter of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America advises that the 1998 champion of the Opuntia Toss is Walter Westyn. The event is based on accuracy, not distance; one throws an opuntia pad (spineless variety, needless to say) at a knife embedded in the ground blade up. Walter scored a direct hit, splitting the opuntia pad in two. Brian Kussman was runner-up. As with horseshoes, close doesn't count.



FROM: Dana Hawkes
Collectibles Department, Sotheby's
1334 York Avenue
New York, New York 10021

1998-09-14

Thank you for contacting Sotheby's regarding your interest in the Moskowitz Collection. There are a few WEIRD TALES and others within the collection. Unfortunately, I do not have a complete price list as to what is to be included in the auction. By the beginning of December I will have a better idea of what is in the collection and will be able to provide you with more specific information.

FROM: Scott Crow
10741 Fair Oaks Blvd #36
Fair Oaks, California 95628

1998-05-20

What are your thoughts on oral history? I have become intrigued with the topic recently. With so much emphasis on electronic and published recording of information, will the oral method of recording stories pass away?

[I'm sure people will still be out there with tape recorders doing oral histories. My belief, though, is that if you're going to do oral histories, paper transcriptions are still needed. Paper will always be compatible with any future readers. Tape machines and computer disks change over a decade, and finding a working machine to play back the recordings will be quite a struggle. Yes, I know there are hobbyists out there who have spare parts to fix a machine, but tracking down the right part, assuming you know how to fix a machine, is a time-waster.]

FROM: Henry Welch 1998-07-21
1525 - 16 Avenue
Grafton, Wisconsin 53024

I don't really think that FACTSHEET FIVE is a necessity for success in fanzine fandom. Rodney Leighton sent me my first issue just a few weeks ago and I don't think I've been missing much. In 11+ years of publishing THE KNARLEY KNEWS I have never sent a copy to F5 and I don't regret it. I think I have been more satisfied by building slowly and being discriminating in who I send issues to.

[Regretably there are any number of neo-zinesters who do not understand that there is no such thing as a focal-point zine in the Papernet. Everyone is at the centre of their portion of the Papernet and on the periphery of others'. Each zine is a node in the Papernet, and the Papernet has no centre.]

The old computer technology is still out there. Just last month I saw both a punchcard reader and a paper tape puncher at a yard sale. It is unlikely that either of the devices worked ... I even have a box of unpunched cards in my office at work that I'll use someday as notecards.

FROM: Joseph Major 1998-05-27
1409 Christy Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040

John Campbell once at a con declared that if fandom were to vanish, the circulation of ASTOUNDING would not significantly change. At which point someone stood up, waving a copy of the latest issue, and asked "But where will you get your writers?". All the writers in said issue were from fandom. Nowadays, of course, we are spared this, since the main SF magazines only publish established writers, as do the many original anthologies.

FROM: Carolyn Clowes 1998-05-25
5911 West Pay Drive NW
Depaw, Indiana 47115

I understand the annoyance of some zinesters at getting noticed, not to mention trivialized. There they are, doing their underground thing, preaching to their counter culture choir, and along comes the Establishment saying they're cool, or worse, cute. How maddening to hear "You're one of us", when the object of the exercise was to say "No, I'm not!". Any writer wants to be read, but for a dedicated contrarian, acceptance can erode identity. Far better to provoke or offend than to have one's message so casually absorbed.

FROM: Lloyd Penney 1998-06-20
1706 - 24 Eva Road
Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B2

The Paul Cornell book on Doctor Who fandom belies my own experiences with it. Toronto is the home of the Doctor Who Information Network (DWIN). I've known about DWIN for over a decade, and for most of those years the scene was dominated by two young women, Louise Hypher and Lisa Truant. I can't believe the Doctor Who scene is homo-

sexual in nature. Many of the men in DWIN are quiet scholarly types, but most are quite heterosexual with quiet, scholarly girlfriends. Just last weekend, Lisa Truant married her longtime beau Irwin Tan. My wife Yvonne and I attended the wedding and reception. Doctor Who fandom here simply represents a cross-section of fandom in general.

FROM: Buck Coulson 1998-05-20
2677W 500N
Hartford City, Indiana 47348-9575

It's not really the notice of the mass media that is objectionable, but who is noticed. The media, by its nature, tends to mention fanzines and fan writers who write about commercially popular subjects. In our field, fanzines devoted to books and magazines attract little attention. The attention goes to the movie/TV fanzines, beginning with Star Trek. Trekkies were treated with mild contempt by literary fans, but they were the ones the media pounced on and gave attention to. Literary fans were naturally annoyed at this publicity given an 'inferior' group, and the attendant inference that all SF fans were movie fans. It was felt that literary fandom had been insulted.

FROM: Harry Warner Jr 1998-05-17
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

I can't share the belief that some zine publishers might graduate to commercial writing accomplishments because the occasional zine that comes my way seems about equal in writing style and content to what I hear on a radio talk show.

ZINE LISTINGS

by Dale Speirs

TRAP DOOR #18 (US\$4 or The Usual from Robert Lichtman, Box 30, Glen Ellen, California 95442) The obitazine of SF fandom, it almost seems, with tributes and memorials of deceased fans. A brief account of a search for Jules Verne's gravesite, ignored by his own people, no matter how famous the author may be elsewhere. A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country.

PROBE #104 (The Usual from Science Fiction South Africa, Box 781401, Sandton 2146, South Africa) Clubzine, with mostly fiction and very professional artwork, all nicely printed and in card covers.

BIBLIOZINE #62 (The Usual from John Held Jr, Box 410837, San Francisco, California 94141) Single-sheet mail art zine with an annotated bibliography on a different theme in each issue. This one is about George Maciunas, of the Fluxus mail and performance art group. John Lennon said he had never met anyone as bohemian as Maciunas. Tales about about Fluxus projects, proposed and actual.

TIGHTBEAM #210 (Details from Janine Stinson, Box 430314, Big Pine Key, Florida 33043-0314) Clubzine of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, with a few news and club notes but mostly locs and con reports. If you like to letterhack, you might want to join this one.

LIME GREEN NEWS #18 (US\$2 or zine trade from Carolyn Substitute, Box 771, Florissant, Missouri 63032) Mail art zine, with project listings and reports on recently completed projects such as Misuse And Abuse Of Household Appliances. An account of earthworks projects; if you can't build your own Stonehenge, why not build spiral jetties in the backyard. Another project was to carry art items on a trip and photograph them at tourist spots.

BROKEN PENCIL #7 (\$4.95 at newsagents or Broken Pencil, Box 203, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S7) A reviewzine of Canadian zines, mostly music or personal zines, plus some books and recordings. This issue includes a flexi-disc as well, a part of the special theme on post-punk music and Canadian distro.

EVIDENCE OF ACTIVE THOUGHT #2 (US\$8 from Rich Mackin, Box 890, Allston, Massachusetts 02134) The cost may seem a bit steep, but it goes for postage, as this is not a zine or book but a mail art assemblage. Mackin got a hold of a bunch of fanny packs cheap, and has filled them full of stickers, booklets, detoured toys, and postcards. Sort of a mini-Fluxus box. If you don't like the stuff, you can always empty it out and use the pack to hold your cellphone. Interesting to go through.

AMUSING YOURSELF TO DEATH #11 (US\$4 or zine trade to Ruel Gaviola, Box 91934, Santa Barbara, California 93190-1934) Reviewzine with reviews that are a bit more than the standard one-paragraph summary. I will say one thing for this zine; it has more ability to activate readers than any other zine I've ever had OPUNTIA listed in. I seldom get any response from a listing in FACTSHEET FIVE or BROKEN PENCIL, but I can always tell when the latest issue of AYTD is out because I suddenly get a batch of letters from the USA mentioning they saw my review there, even before my own copy of AYTD arrives.

KNARLEY KNEWS #69 (The Usual from Henry Welch, 1525 - 16 Avenue, Grafton, Wisconsin 53024-2017) Genzine with accounts of tourists in Las Vegas, SCA events, a bicycle tour through Australia, reviews, and locs. Welch has an on-going listing of credit card offers he gets in the mail; in the past year he got letters offering him 80 credit cards with a total credit line of \$2,046,979.43.

SUBSPACE INTERNATIONAL ZINE SHOW (US\$6 cash from Stephen Perkins, 1816 East College Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52245) This is the show catalogue from a 1992 zine fair, so it is obviously of historical interest only, but I list it for those researching the history of zines. The fair had a good selection of international zines from around the world, with emphasis on mail art and punkzines. Listings are illustrated with the covers of the zines and include statements by the publishers.

FOSSILBED #11 (Zine trade from Guy Miller, 2951 Archer Lane, Springfield, Ohio 45503-1209) An apazine that includes a bundle of other zines, such as one by Ken Faig Jr that discusses proto-Riot Grrl Edith Miniter, who began publishing a zine at age 16 in the year 1883. Also included is a copy of HESPERIDES #1, published in April 1902.

CONTRACT V10#3 (The Usual from John Mansfield, 516 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0G2) Newszine of Canadian SF cons with convention listings, news on CUFF and con-running, and how-to tips. The advice on common mistakes in using computers for con-running is certainly useful.

CRIFANAC #1 (The Usual from Ken Forman and Arnie Katz, 7215 Nordic Lights Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119) Fan fund commentary, family reunions compared with fandom, and assorted fannish items.

FANTASY COMMENTATOR #50 (US\$5.75 from A. Langley Searles, 48 Highland Circle, Bronxville, New York 10708-5909) A well-produced 75-page journal in card covers, dealing with the history of SF and its fandom. The writing is more definitive than the average fanzine but not jargony like an academic journal whose authors write to impress a tenure committee, not to inform the reader. This is a memorial to the late Sam Moskowitz, with tributes and some of his articles. Also essays on SF writers.

FAPA #243 (Details from Robert Lichtman, Box 30, Glen Ellen, California 95442) This is an apa, a type of zine distro where members send in x number of copies to a Central Mailer, who then collates them into bundles and returns a set to each participant. FAPA is in its 61st year. This bundle contains 36 zines with 407 pages of copy. There is a limit to the number of members but currently vacancies exist, so if you are interested in SF fandom, hustle a query in to Lichtman for details about qualifications and dues. The zines in this bundle range from sercon SF to perzines to reviewzines, with something for everyone.

OUTWORLDS #69 (US\$5 or editorial whim from Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238-4503) 80 pages of microprint, so this will keep you reading for a while. Articles on teddy bear collecting, a con report with many revelations, an excellent essay by a novelist on how to construct an alien world, and a bird watching trip that attempts a reconciliation between father and son. A running theme throughout is Bowers' discovery of the Web.

GLOBAL MAIL #18 (US\$3 from Global Mail, Box 1309, Grove City, Pennsylvania 16127) Requestzine with hundreds of listings for mail art projects, actions, and zines wanting contributors.

MIMEMEOW #6 (The Usual from Bill Bridget, 4126 Mountain Creek Road #6, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37415) Politics in the small segment of SF fandom concerned about fan funds, the larger segment of mundanes concerned with Japanese atrocities in Nanking, and the implications of extradition treaties and Web sites.

FILE 770 #124 (US\$8 for five issues from Mike Glycer, Box 1056, Sierra Madre, California 91025) Newszine of SF fandom with con reports, tables comparing World-Con bids, news of fandom, and locs.

POSFAX #191 (The Usual from Falls of the Ohio SF and Fantasy Association, Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281) 72 pages of microprint on SF books, con reports, American politics, and lots of locs.

ARTISTAMP NEWS #9 (\$12 for three issues from Ed Varney, Box 3655, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 3Y8) Nicely printed and illustrated, with essays on doing mail art in the days of Communism, interviews with artistamp producers, news of events, and a catalogue of artistamps. A nice feature is that the issue comes with a couple of sheets of artistamps plus a packet of singles.

CANFAPA #2 (Details from Graeme Cameron, #110, 1855 West 2nd Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V6J 1J1) Apa on the subject of Canadian fanzines, and how to preserve them, promote them, and encourage new zine editors. The ultimate purpose is generating more interest in zinedom.

PROPER BOSKONIAN #43 (The Usual from New England Science Fiction Association, Box 809, Framingham, Massachusetts 01701) Clubzine which starts off with a good piece of fiction about what would happen if our brains were automatically downloaded into personal computers, then off to Washington, D.C., with a report on what lobbying for the space programme is actually like. There is a play-script from an SF convention, which reaffirms my belief that plays should be spoken, not read. Ian Gunn's cartoons are throughout this issue and enjoyable as always.

MESHUGGAN #15 (US\$2 from Feh! Press, 200 East Tenth Street, #603, New York, New York 10003-7702) A variety of short stories, comics, and miscellaneous pieces. The article on the Darwin Awards mixes newspaper accounts of people doing stupid things with urban legends such as the man who strapped a jato to his car. Queen Of The Scene is a comic that scores some devastating points on the punk rockers who think that the Revolution is about independent record labels.

SQUIGGLEDEY HOY #3 (The Usual from Bridget Bradshaw, 19 Wedgewood Road, Hitchin, Herts SG4 0EX, England) From the Bridget Formerly Known As Hardcastle, having married June 6, but in the meantime pubbing her ish. Zine reviews, con reports, and locs.

FOR THE CLERISY V5#28 (The Usual from Brant Kresovich, Box 404, Getzville, New York 14068-0404) A Polish trip report that segues into commentary on how to get along with others in foreign countries and dealing with culture shock.

PHILOSOFY #9 (The Usual from Alexander Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78239-4022) A zine devoted to the philosophy of ethics and morality but applied to regular life. No academic jargon. The writers discuss serious themes such as death, war, and governance. Keeping the zineish balance, there are personal accounts, letters, recipes, and others.

MIMOSA #22 (The Usual from Nicki and Richard Lynch, Box 3120, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20885) This zine specializes in SF fanhistory, the issue at hand having articles on WorldCons, fanzines, and early fandom. Well produced, with card covers.

VANAMONDE #257 (The Usual from John Hertz, 236 South Coronado Street, #409, Los Angeles, California 90057) A single-sheet apazine, but it appears weekly, so it adds up to a regular size zine over the month or the quarter. Comments on a wide variety of topics, from literary to SF con reports.

THE GEIS LETTER (US\$1 or letter via Richard Geis, Box 11408, Portland, Oregon 97211-0408) Because his eyes are going, Geis no longer accepts zine trades. Since he can prepare his zine on computer in large type before stepping it down for printing, he'll keep going. Mostly conspiracy reports.

ANGRY THOREAUAN #21 (US\$5 from Angry Thoreauan, Box 3478, Hollywood, California 90078) Slick colour cover not fit for decent company and interior contents just as flammatory. The big news in this issue is that Monique, who does a regular column on her life as a phone sex operator, had the pleasure of a visit by the Secret Service. The agents were acting on a false report that she had threatened President Clinton. Elsewhere are the usual zine and music reviews, record ads, and life on the streets of Los Angeles. Most poignant were interviews with woman prisoners on what daily life is like behind bars.

PINKETTE #16d (The Usual from Karen Pender-Gunn, Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia) Smallzine of lists and clippings, locs, and personal notes.

ON SPEC #33 (\$6 from On Spec, Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G6) Canada's SF prozine. Two stories that I thought noteworthy were "Families", about a near-future society where children have microcameras implanted in their foreheads so that parents can keep a perfect record of their childhood and maintain public safety, and "The Fourth Horseman", a non-stereotyped mix of vampires and Old West cowboys in a ghost town.

TYPOGRAPUNX #Ff (The Usual from 15 Churchville Road, #115-163, Bel Air, Maryland 21014) A strange mixture of punk and typographical theory. The predominant points of this issue are braille and a fount called Faceopen, which has to be the most illegible one invented yet.

SOUTHERN FANDOM CONFEDERATION BULLETIN V6#12 (The Usual from Tom Feller, Box 68203, Nashville, Tennessee 37206) SF clubzine with news and notes of SFdom in the southern USA, con reports, and lots of zine and club listings.

MIND WALLABY #3 (The Usual from Ian Gunn, Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia) Personal news about his cancer, life with the wrong number of an Avon Lady, some urban legends, and locs.

WRESTLING THEN AND NOW #100 (US\$2 from Evan Ginzburg, Box 640471, Oakland Gardens Station, Flushing, New York 11364) When I was a kid, I used to watch Stampede Wrestling on television, not so much for action, but for the antics of the unflappable announcer Ed Whalen. He was a newscaster (still going 40 years later!) in his day job, but did a bit of slumming on Saturdays by calling wrestling matches and interviewing the wrestlers. I've not followed wrestling since those days, but was interested to read over the copy of this zine sent me. Not too much about actual wrestling in this issue, since it is more a congratulatory puff piece on the occasion of 100 issues, but there are some interesting comparisons to be made. It is something like some punkzines I have read, with cries of "Sellout!" and "Things were better in those days, by gum." There are terminological differences such as referring to zines as 'sheets'. There is an article worrying about the decline in the number of wrestling sheets. I have to wonder if this is a real decline or the usual moaning "fanzines are dead" such as we used to see in SFdom until Robert Lichtman started keeping statistics and killed that belief by using facts, not memory.

ODDS, SODS, AND HOGWASH (The Usual from Ken Cheslin, 29 Kestrel Road, Halesowen, West Midlands B63 2PH, England) Anthology of Cheslin's cartoons from past years and fanzines. The artwork is crude, to put it politely, and the captions carry the humour, usually mildly. I did like the one about the imperious chap being borne on a litter telling his bearers: "And the next time we go through a door remember to bend your knees!".

THE CELTIC HART #2 (\$7 from Cari Buziak, Box 23178, Calgary, Alberta T2S 3B1) I bought this at ConVer-sion 15. It is the bulletin of the Celtic Harts Society, devoted to Celtic culture. Articles on Celtic knots, teach-yourself Gaelic, history, myths, and The Troubles.

VISUAL DELIGHT VS. VISUAL DISASTER #2 (The Usual (mail art form) from Joe Decie, 11 Malvern Road, Alexandra Park, Nottingham NG3 5GZ, England) This is a mail art project documentation mini-zine. Participants filled in two blank squares, one subtitled Visual Delight, and the other Visual Disaster. Some are a bit predictable, such as the recycle arrows symbol paired with a swastika, or the hand holding an olive branch with the fighter jet leaving an aircraft carrier. I did like the one with a multitude of typefaces as the disaster, a thing that is still seen in zines whose editors are determined to use every typeface on their hard drive.

ICHTHYOELECTROANALGESIA #4 (The Usual from Sean McLachlan, Box 3734, Tucson, Arizona 85722-3734) Having just finished his Master's thesis, thg editor is now in Arizona. Articles herein are on a wide variety of archaeological subjects, Arabic culture, and Mormon fakery of North American aboriginal history.

GALACTO-CELTIC NEWSFLASH Summer 1998 (The Usual from Franz Miklis, A-5151, Nussdorf 179, Austria) In English, starting off with his party to celebrate World Wide Party #5, then an account of a vacation in Istanbul.

MARKTIME #50 (The Usual from Mark Strickert, 300 South Beau Drive #1, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016) Strickert's hobby is collecting the counties of USA, that is, visiting as many of them as possible, usually by car. This issue has the latest installment of his travels, as well as locs and baseball stuff.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE #52 (The Usual from Jean Weber, Box 640, Airlie Beach, Queensland 4802, Australia) SF convention reports, locs, and Weber's move to the coast of Queensland.

THE FREETHINKER #7 (The Usual from Tom Feller, Box 68203, Nashville, Tennessee 37206-8203) Comparisons between movies and the books they were made from, UFOs, and locs.

OBSCURE #43 (US\$1 from Jim Romanesko, 45 Albert Street South, St. Paul, Minnesota 55105) Newszine of zine-dom, leading off with the death of Tim Yohannan, who edited MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL, a 100+ page punkzine. Steve Duncombe, author of a book about zines that is not a hack job but an interesting look at zines from the activist point-of-view, is interviewed. The least important news is Jim Goad being done up by police in an assault case against his girlfriend. Goad, with his ex-wife, published the zine ANSWER ME!, a shock zine. His now ex-girlfriend posted messages on the alt.zines Usenet group. The whole affair is convincing proof that perhaps universal literacy is not the desirable thing some people think it is.

ADVENTURES OF AN UNEMPLOYED ENTOMOLOGIST #9 (US\$2 or zine trade from Box 3026, Worcester, Massachusetts 01613-3026) Life job-hunting in the entomology field and a look at butterfly houses. Also school children doing installation art of paper-filled trash bags in the shape of animals.

OUT OF THE KAJE #1 (The Usual from Karen Johnson, 35 Mariana Avenue, South Croydon, Victoria 3136, Australia) An apazine of a neo zinester from whom we hope to read more. This issue starts off with phobias and a rant about a proposed VAT. Other original material includes reviews. Too much space filler but for the first issue that can be tolerated.

BANANA WINGS #11 (The Usual from Clare Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey CRO 7HA, England) Martian fiction and fact, attending an SF con during a flood, a Martian version of Desert Island Disks, an extended review of John Wyndham's works, and a lot more, enough to fill 68 pages. A doorstopper zine with lots of reading.

COVER COMMUNICATIONS FROM ZETA CORVI #1 (The Usual from Andrew Murdoch, 2563 Heron Street, Victoria, British Columbia V8R 5Z9) A thin first issue, but as Murdoch has just returned from gafiation, we will expect thicker issues in the future. Some news of SF awards and a few brief reviews.

WHIZZBANGER GUIDE TO ZINE DISTRIBUTORS #2 (US\$3 from Shannon Colebank, Box 5591, Portland, Oregon 97228) A new type of reviewzine; this one lists not the actual zines themselves but rather zine distributors. A useful directory for zinesters who want to go the commercial route and sell through stores and mail order.

OUTWORLDS #70 (US\$7.50 from Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238-4503) At 150 pages, this isn't just a doorstopper zine; it could be used to chock the wheels on a passenger jet. An abundance of personal accounts, goings-on in SF fandom, and lists. Several evenings to read through this one.

GRAMMAR Q AND A #12 (Stamp or IRC from Misti and Scott Crow, 10741 Fair Oaks Blvd #36, Fair Oaks, California 95628) At the other end of the zine size range is this single-sheeter. This issue deals with capital/capitol, pluralizing acronyms, and other queries from readers who are baffled by the English language.

SAUCER SMEAR V45#7 (US\$2 from James Moseley, Box 1709, Key West, Florida 33041) The scandal sheet of UFOology which is equivalent to SFdom's ANSIBLE. That is to say, a humourous look at the personalities and events in the field. This issue reports on a UFO-naut busted by taxmen, the confession of the people who faked the autopsy on the alien, the five Roswell crash sites (like pieces of the True Cross, they continue to multiply), and MUFON goings-on.

KERLES #1 (The Usual from Tommy Ferguson, 40 Deramore Avenue, Belfast BT7 3ER, Northern Ireland) Small reviewzine which considers five zines in depth.

THE INCISORS REPORT #4 (C\$20.03 or US\$15 for pre-supporting membership from Toronto in '03, Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1A2) This is the news report of the committee bidding for the World Science Fiction Convention in 2003. Comes with a neat fridge magnet of the mascot flying an Art Deco spaceship. This issue starts off with Bob Tucker writing about his time at the first Toronto WorldCon in 1948. The rest of the letter is news about hotels, advice to outlanders wanting to come to Canada, and membership lists. Pre-supporters are now past 1,000. I'll see you in Toronto in 2003!

OLAF #1 (The Usual from Ken Cheslin, 29 Kestrel Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 2PH, England) Anthology of Olaf cartoons from three decades. Crudely drawn, but an indomitable spirit. These cartoons range from the marching band of the Noise Abatement Society to that old favourite of steeldrivers "When I nod my head hit it".

FLIPSIDE #114 (US\$4.25 from Box 60790, Pasadena, California 91116) Thick musiczine with occasional burst of colour inside and slick cover. Hundreds of ads of independent punk rock labels, music and zine reviews, scene reports, ranting columnists, and interviews.

THYME #122 (The Usual from Alan Stewart, Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 8005, Australia) News and notes on SFdom in Australia, reviews, locs, and the final installment of the Space Time Buccaneers.

SLUG IN A DITCH #2 (\$2 from Judson Hansell, 32 Bernard Way NW, Calgary, Alberta T3K 2E9) Mostly poetry and miscellaneous prose.

RELUCTANT FAMILUS #52 (The Usual from Tom Sadler, 422 West Maple Avenue, Adrian, Michigan 49221-1627) Reviews of various items, a story about dognapping committed by a cat, fan art, war memories from the RAF, subway users, a firefighter, and Swedish fandom. Lots of locs.

QUIPU #9 (The Usual from Vicki Rosenzweig, 33 Indian Road, 6-R, New York, New York 10034) Perzine, mostly in this issue about prowling a burned-out house, and a few locs.

X-POM #2 (The Usual from Henry Gibbens, Tullamarine District Veterinary Clinic, 38 Fawcner Street, Westmeadows, Victoria 3049, Australia) Comments on death in the movies and how to avoid it, censorship, biography, and trivia collecting.

SCOPUS:3007 #9 (The Usual from Alexander Bouchard, Box 573, Hazel Park, Michigan 48030) Reviews, WorldCon talk, costuming, personal accounts, and con reports.

SPIRIT OF '72 (\$2 from Canadian Culture Liberation Front, Box 21538, Vancouver, British Columbia V5N 4A0) Almost a punkzine, but starts off with Anne Of Green Gables and goes on to the Canada-Russia hockey series of 1972, from which this zine takes its title. Other stuff mixed to make it a bit of everything.

BOOK OF LETTERS #10 (US\$3 from Rich Mackin, Box 890, Allston, Massachusetts 02134) Mackin writes letters to corporations about their products, from candy to shampoo. He then prints both his letter and the response, ranging from form letters to no reply at all.

ERG #142 (The Usual from Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5RQ, England) Essay on the use of early SF pulps to educate the reader when all they wanted was a cracking good yarn. A horror story on the perversion of the word 'fanzine', then how to handle a tea party, followed by a history of the SR-71 spyplane.

Don DeBrandt's latest novel is STEELDRIVER (Ace 1998, ISBN 0-441-00520-9), a re-telling of the John Henry legend, lawd, lawd, but with a more complex plot that isn't hackwork. The hero of the book is Jon Hundred, part of a tunnelling team on a company-owned planet. He is drilling through one side of the mountain. From the other side is a team led by an artificial intelligence named Mel. The scutwork and indentured labour is done by humans and a race of aliens called Toolies. When Jon and Mel make a bet as to who will reach the tunnel mid-point first, everyone else on the planet bets their future on one of the two. Mel is betting everything it has to buy its freedom. The Toolies bet everything they have on Jon to buy their freedom. And so the race begins.

But nothing is as it seems. Jon is 80% cyborg, as much a machine as Mel, so this is not a neo-Luddite tale that sees the human triumph, because there is no human to triumph. A bounty hunter arrives on the planet to take out Jon because of something he did in his off-planet past. But Hone, the hunter, is not a pure bad guy who is evil because that's the way evil guys are supposed to be. Hone is waiting for Jon on the other side of the tunnel, and Jon knows it. While waiting for that battle to begin, Hone liberates the Toolies and starts them off on the path of rebellion. Hone is genuinely concerned about the Toolies, and begins a covert campaign to liberate them from humans. Mel is presented sympathetically to the reader, but it soon becomes evident that it is biased against Toolies. Jon and Mel are friends, not enemies. None of the relationships between the characters are cardboard Good versus Bad; there is the same kind of believable complexity that exists in the real world.

Stephen Baxter's steampunk novel ANTI-ICE (Harper-Prism 1993, ISBN 0-06-105421-6) is a world where Queen Victoria abdicated in favour of her beloved son,

the Germans never united, and a strange type of ice was found in the Antarctic. The anti-ice has two properties; it explodes when warmed up above freezing, and it is a superconductor. On this basis, an alternative technology, under the control of the British, has developed. In the background are other strange events. Earth has a second moon, called the Little Moon, which has no part in the plot until the epilogue. The Crimean War was a success thanks to the anti-ice bomb, a single one of which was sufficient to destroy a fortress. The heroes of the story are suddenly sidetracked to the Moon as a result of sabotage by a French patriot. While they are gone, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 begins, but takes a different turn due to the alternative history. Baxter writes very well in the style of H.G. Wells or Jules Verne. Indeed, this book took my back to my childhood days when I read through the canon of Wells and Verne, and from there to Asimov, Clarke, and Norton. There is a minor problem with expository lumps in this novel. Baxter wasn't quite always successful in blending in information about this society without a few "As you know, Professor, ..." lectures, but this was only a minor problem.

Other than the Discworld novels, I generally avoid fantasy, especially anything with a blurb about a young lad seeking his destiny by questing for the Sacred Knick-Knack of Qwerty and overthrowing the evil King to take his rightful place on the throne. However, somewhere I came across THE PRINTER'S DEVIL by Chico Kidd (Baen 1995, ISBN 0-671-87668-6). This novel alternates between our time, when Alan Bellman and his wife Kim are English yuppies whose hobby is bell-ringing, and the Cromwell republic, when journeyman printer Roger Southwell, whose hobby is also bell ringing, is dabbling in things he ought not. He finishes his mortal life living in a bell tower, whose din keeps away the demon he summoned and cannot dispose of. But Southwell leaves a booby trap for the future, to be triggered by Bellman. Neither he nor the demon expect the strength of Kim's character, the major disruptor of Southwell's plan for resurrection.

Being a professional horticulturist, I was at once attracted to the paperback PEST CONTROL (Avon 1996, ISBN 0-380-78868-3) by Bill Fitzhugh. This comedy is about a pest control specialist who chucks his job saturating restaurants with chemical to keep insects at bay and gambles his livelihood on developing new hybrids of assassin bugs for natural pest control. He runs an advertisement offering his services, but unfortunately one of his customers is under the mistaken idea that he is a hit man. One thing leads to another and the world's top ten hit men move in to eliminate the competition to their closed shop, only to be eliminated themselves by the oblivious bug man. Then the CIA gets involved and the farce works its way to an obvious conclusion but with a few good laughs along the way to make up for the lack of suspense.

Mack Reynold's DAY AFTER TOMORROW (Ace 1976) caught my eye because the paperback cover depicts a man crucified on a giant computer punchcard. This is the story of government agents in a conformist future who have caught wind of The Movement. The feds know it is some kind of revolutionary underground but have trouble determining what it is about to do. Somewhere there is a pile of billions of dollars of near-perfect counterfeit currency, but who will circulate it and how could they do it? The plan is discovered to be economic warfare, and even the Soviets don't want it, they preferring the devil they know. SF doesn't often make excursions into the real-life economy, so I'll add this to my very small collection of econowar fiction.

I've always regretted I never wrote down many of the stories my father told of his career as a veterinarian before it was too late. Someone who did make such an effort was Evan Ginzburg, whose father was a New York City cab driver. HEY CABBY! is a chapbook of stories in the life of Arthur Ginzburg. Life in the big city from an authentic source. (US\$5.95 from Evan Ginzburg,

Box 640471, Oakland Gardens Station, Flushing, New York 11364).

I feel safe in saying that the novel SOULWORM is the first SF story to be set in Weyburn, Saskatchewan (Royal Fireworks Press 1997, ISBN 0-88092-411-X). The author is Edward Willett, who takes a previously-known idea, that of an organism that feeds on emotions, and brings in a few new twists. The story alternates between two universes. In one, where the novel begins, an order of guardians, all women, hunt down and destroy soulworms, which parasitize organisms and reproduce when enough violent emotions have been set into action. There is a gate from that universe to ours, through which one soulworm manages to travel. It appears in Weyburn, which rural town is unaware that it is a gate between universes. Nor do humans know about soulworms. When a Weyburn girl suddenly goes bad and organizes a gang, the locals pass it off as another teenager fallen into the wrong crowd. She gradually escalates the violence in that town, as the soulworm controlling her seeks energy to breed and colonize this new world. An acolyte from the soulworm universe manages to travel through the gate into Weyburn, occupies the body of another girl, and begins the battle. Both the acolyte and soulworm must adjust to our strange planet as they simultaneously seek out each other and begin the struggle.

Ten years ago, Canadian SF consisted of ten expatriate writers from England or USA and about two Canada-born authors. Now there are too many to keep track of, and if an SF convention wants a Canuck GoH, they have a real choice. NORTHERN DREAMERS by Edo van Belkom (Quarry Press 1998, ISBN 1-55082-206-3) is a trade paperback of interviews of 22 such authors, from well-known suspects such as Elisabeth Vonarburg and Robert J. Sawyer to a few I'd never heard of. Each interview briefly covers the author's biography and bibliography, then goes on to discuss some aspect unique to that author. This is a good reference book; I look forward to additional volumes.

THE PAISLEY ROCKETEERS by Donald Malcolm (Stenlake Publishing 1997, ISBN 1 84033 009 0) will appeal to both philatelists and SF fans. This book, profusely illustrated with colour covers, is an account of the Paisley Rocketeers Society. The PRS traces its origin back to SF fan John Stewart, who fired a homemade rocket in 1935, and thus started the interest of many in that part of Scotland. As other rocketeers did around the world, letters carried on the rockets were used to publicize the activities and earn money to help out with the expenses. The PRS dissolved on the outbreak of war in 1939, and was eventually re-formed in 1965. Along the way it dealt with the hazards of the hobby, such as exploding rockets, which is why a goodly number of the letters carried have holes burned through them or water damage from unintended landings off course. Another hazard, no less deadly to the hobby, was H.M. Inspector of Explosives, who, in 1969, managed to cripple the PRS by banning use of homemade conventional rockets. The PRS then switched to aquajets, rockets propelled by compressed air and water, which could obtain some surprising distances. The Home Office threatened these as well, but this was shrugged off on the grounds that if water pistols are legal, then so must be aquajets. A fascinating read. Price is £6.50 from Stenlake Publishing, Ochiltree Sawmill, The Lade, Ochiltree, Ayrshire KA18 2NX, Scotland. Visa and Mastercard accepted.

CABAL (Collins, 1989) is a horror novel by Clive Barker. I don't normally read horror but I saw a mention somewhere that it took place in Calgary. It does indeed mention this great city but the reviewer was even more confused about Alberta geography than Barker was. The plot was about a man framed for gruesome serial murders by his shrink Decker, who then gets Boone shot by police. Boone discovers the underworld, a place called Midian, under a cemetery somewhere in northwest Alberta. Boone's girlfriend Lori gets involved, Decker gets his punishment, and blood flows down the streets, not to mention a god

living in Midian who is not nice even to its acolytes. There are some jarring notes, such as Boone driving from Calgary to High Prairie by way of Athabaska, which would be like driving from London to Paisley by way of Cardiff. When Decker sets up Boone for the frameup, he is armed by police with a gun. Not too likely even in the USA for police to give a psychiatrist a gun, then send him into a house with a supposed lunatic who was a murderer. And in the Thog's Masterclass of Writing are such phrases as the first sentence of Chapter 15: "The sun rose like a stripper, keeping its glory well covered by cloud till it seemed there'd be no show at all, then casting its rags off one by one." Another oddity was the constant reference to policemen as troopers (they are constables) and a Chief Of Police in a rural area in a worried state about his supervisors in Edmonton. If he was a Chief of Police, he would answer only to the local town council; there is no provincial police force, and while almost all municipalities contract out to the RCMP then in that case there would be no Chief, only an Inspector. But if you live outside Alberta, you probably would not catch any of that, save perhaps the striptease sun, just as I don't trip up on little details in some novel set in New York City or London. What is evident in this novel is some of the padding, not a huge amount, but noticeable. Every so often there are details of gore and flesh, no doubt expected by regular horror readers, but only slowing down the story to me. I don't read horror for a number of reasons, and this book failed to convince me that I am missing anything.

THE GOLDCAMP VAMPIRE by Elizabeth Scarborough (Bantam, 1987) follows Valentine Lovelace to Yukon during the gold rush of 1896. She was invited by her recently deceased father's ex-mistress, who is on her way to work for a dance hall owner named Vasily Vladovich Bledinoff. The Vlad of whom he is the son of is that well-known Vlad of Transylvania. He and fellow vampires have discovered the advantages of the long winter nights of the Arctic, and a land where being killed by a werewolf passes as an ordinary wolf attack. Keep your eye on weremooses, eh?

Canadian history has certain icons that blaze above the political landscape like gas flares from an oil-field. The Plains of Abraham, where Québec fell to the British in 1759. Louis Riel, who led two rebellions, one in 1869 which was a success and resulted in the creation of Manitoba, and the other in 1885, a failure that saw Riel fall through the gallows trap-door into martyrdom. The most painful for modern Canadians is the Avro Arrow interceptor plane, whose cancellation in 1959 destroyed the Canadian aerospace industry and gave birth to one of our few home-grown conspiracy theories.

ARROWDREAMS is a trade paperback edited by Mark Shainblum and John Dupuis (Nuage Editions, 1997, ISBN 0-921-833-51-2). It is an anthology of alternative Canadas, ranging from the British losing on the Plains of Abraham to what might have happened if the Red Baron hadn't been shot down by that Canadian air ace.

"Hockey's Night In Canada" is the lead-off story. It will probably convey little of its emotion to a non-Canadian, being based on what might have happened if Canada had lost to Russia in the 1972 hockey series. Twenty-five years later, Canada Post issued a set of stamps honouring our victory. But what if that last-second series-winning shot on the Russian goal had instead bounced off the goal post? Even though it was Canada who won in our timeline, the trauma of near-defeat in 1972 forced a major re-examination of our national game. Canadians had always thought they were the best hockey players in the world. After all, we invented the game. What if those Russians had actually beaten us? This story posits that the NHL would have degenerated into something like the CFL. The latter requires a minimum number of Canadian football players, so that the league would not be totally dominated by American players. If Canada had lost in 1972, it would have been Russian players who were subject to an import quota.

When Prime Minister John Diefenbaker cancelled the Avro Arrow project in 1959, many Canadians felt it was due to a conspiracy by American military-industrialists who did not want to see that plane outclassing theirs. Others feel it was more a matter that Diefenbaker was panicked by the costs of the project. "The Coming Age Of The Jet" surprises the reader by focussing on an earlier project of Avro, the 1950 Jetliner. This passenger jet has been forgotten by most Canadians because its failure did not destroy the industry. Indeed, Avro diverted its energy and staff into the Arrow interceptor. The Arrow became the symbol of Canadian loss of nerve because its failure resulted in thousands unemployed all at once. It is said that Diefenbaker never understood the consequences of his action until it was too late, and he was more shocked than anyone else at what happened. But if the Jetliner had proceeded as it should have, Canada would have had a long-range high-speed transport not only for internal use, but just in time for the Korean War.

"Cold Ground", in which Louis Riel was not successfully hanged in 1885, is a story that failed because it brings in magicians. Far better to have the jury vote for acquittal, and carry on the story from there. This is not the first alternative history to muddy the waters by adding in unnecessary plot movers. It just barely worked for the Lord Darcy stories of Randall Garrett, but few writers since have been able to make it work.

"Thermometers Melting" brings Ernest Hemingway into Halifax in 1917, just in time to get involved with a Belgian munitions ship. The ship that in our timeline caught fire after colliding with another ship in the harbour. A fire that triggered the largest non-nuclear explosion in history and destroyed the entire city. Some nice details are mixed in, such as the fact that Nova Scotians drove on the left side of the road at the time (as did British Columbians; the two provinces converted to right side driving in the 1920s).

The quality of the stories in ARROWDREAMS is good, and I expect to re-read this again many times.

The province of Alberta will celebrate its centennial in 2005. In 1988, the Alberta 2005 Centennial History Society was formed to begin preparations for the day, of which included a series of historical volumes. One of those volumes has just been published. THE LITERARY HISTORY OF ALBERTA, VOLUME ONE by George Melnyk is a trade paperback (University of Alberta Press, 1998, ISBN 0-88864-296-2). This book created a mild stir among Albertans because many, myself included, would have thought this province is not old enough to have much of a literary history, nevermind enough for two volumes. (The second volume, covering the time after WW2, will appear at a later date.)

The book gets off to a shaky start because it begins with the pictographs of the aboriginal tribes, dating about 400 A.D. and best preserved at Writing-On-Stone in southern Alberta. Melnyk's case is shaky, as he admits himself, for pictographs are not writing or literature as we understand it. They are in a grey area between art, ideographs, and oral tradition. The Writing-On-Stone pictographs, like teepee art, were used to tell stories in pictures, combined with oral history.

Firmer ground is reached for the period 1754 to 1869, when western and Arctic Canada draining into Hudson's Bay was called Rupert's Land by the Europeans. Native tribes had their own names of course, but their ideas didn't count. The Governor and Company of Gentlemen Adventurers Trading Into Hudson's Bay, more simply the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), was chartered in 1670 and still exists today as a nationwide department store chain. The HBC was granted all of Rupert's Land and ruled it until 1869. Alberta, being in the hinterland, was not reached by Europeans until the 1700s when the first fur traders reached the area. The literary history of this period was that of exploration literature. Books and articles dealt with the

immense natural resources waiting to be taken, with lots of thrilling accounts of noble savages and wild animals to keep up reader interest in between all the statistics and boosterism.

The HBC transferred its interest in Rupert's Land to the Canadian government in 1869. Ottawa fumbled the transfer, losing a full-blown rebellion led by Louis Riel in 1869/70, as a result of which the province of Manitoba came into existence prematurely. The rest of Rupert's Land became the Northwest Territories, from which Alberta was carved in 1905. (As was Saskatchewan at the same time; the process is still going on, for Nunavut will be taken out of the NWT in 1999.) Melnyk defines the next period of Alberta's literary history as the territorial period from 1870 to 1904. The literature was dominated by tourist books extolling the marvels of Alberta, the missionary books hitting up the home congregations for more money to civilize the savages, and the first fiction, heavily dominated by Mountie adventures. (The NWMP arrived in 1874 in Alberta; in 1875 they founded Calgary.)

The provincial period of literature runs from 1905 to 1929. It included a heavy emphasis on fiction dealing with the lives of normal people, as opposed to action. A very prominent part was played by national suffragists such as Nellie McClung. The fiction is unread today, as is most of it around the world from that period. The Great Depression and WW2 defined the final period covered in this book, when serious scholarship first began to be published, poetry appeared in significant amounts and drama became popular because of radio. Through the 1905 to 1945 era, agrarian populism was always strong. Albertans agitated against Ottawa and Toronto, who looted it of resources without fair compensation. The heavy mix of immigrants brought with them radicals from Europe who carried on ranting in Alberta. Francophones were never significant outside Winnipeg or Edmonton, but because they had greater literacy, they accordingly had more literature.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT BOF

It is an ancient BOF,
 And he stoppeth one of three.
 "By thy grey goatee and glittering eye,
 Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

"The convention's doors are opened wide,
 And I am Guest of Honour;
 The fans are met, the panels set.
 May'st hear the merry din".

He holds him with his skinny hand,
 "There is a bid", quoth he.
 "Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Guest of Honour sat on a chair.
 He cannot choose but hear.
 And thus spake on that ancient SMOF
 The bright-eyed old BOF.

The bid was cheered, the parties cleared,
 Merrily did we hope.
 Past Cancun, past Berlin,
 We had no trouble to cope.

The fair bid blew, the parties grew,
 The furrow followed free.
 Torcon was the third that ever burst
 Into that inland sea.

He biddeth best, who partieth best
 All cons both great and small.
 For the great Hugo who made us
 He pubbed his ish and all.



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