

# OPUNTIA

47



ISSN 1183-2703

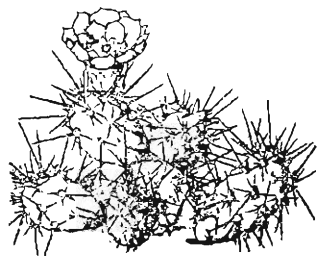
**OPUNTIA** is published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. It is available for \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy, trade for your zine, or letter of comment. Americans: please don't send cheques for small amounts to Canada as the bank fee to cash them is usually more than the amount. US\$ banknotes are acceptable in Canada at par value; what we gain on the exchange rate we lose on the higher postage rate to USA. Do not send mint USA stamps as they are not valid for postage outside USA and I don't collect them.

Whole-numbered OPUNTIA's are sercon, x.1 issues are reviewzines, x.2 issues are indexes, and x.5 issues are perzines.

**ART CREDIT:** *Opuntia* fruits are a popular food item around the world. The Ciskei stamp on the cover shows a prickly pear vendor in southern Africa, but the fruits are often sold in North American and European supermarkets.

**I ALSO HEARD FROM:** Sean Russell Friend, Chester Cuthbert, A. Langley Searles, Sheryl Birkhead (late of Birkshire, homes priced from the mid \$300,000's), Murray Moore (I nominated him for CUFF 2001), Harry Warner Jr

LETTERS  
TO THE  
EDITOR  
[Editor's  
remarks  
in square  
brackets]



FROM: Steve Jeffery  
44 White Way  
Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA, England

2000-11-09

Re: "Your Mileage May Vary (Part 2). What I want to know is, if there are 11 years worth of a fanzine call CONRUNNER distilling the collected expertise of more than a decade, why was 2Kon, by nearly all accounts I've seen of it, such an organizational disaster.

[It's a basic axiom of convention running that the people who need most the advice on how to do the job are the ones who ignore it.]

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

2000-08-25

I think the mentality of fans is that they would rather start a new project rather than take over someone's old project. To me, this is why every new committee member on a convention would rather start fresh than see what was done in the past. It's terribly inefficient, but given how many would rather make their own mark, and not simply pick up where others left off, this inefficiency will continue. Some conventions do train apprentices, but so many fail to pick up what they were trained for.

2001-01-05

Our CUFF trip report seems to have some measure of popularity. Already we're nearly a quarter of the way through the print run.

[Lloyd and Yvonne won the 2000 Canadian Unity Fan Fund, which paid their way from Toronto to Vancouver (and back again, of course). Their CUFF report is now available from Lloyd, cheques payable to him. Price is \$10 and all proceeds to CUFF. Besides their trip report, they have included a history of CUFF since its inception, so this should be a valuable fanhistorical document.]

## FUN WITH PARCELS

by Dale Speirs

Sometimes those urban legends are true. Stories have long circulated in the philatelic community about how construction supplies such as bricks were mailed as individual parcels because it was cheaper than shipping as regular freight. This anomaly arose many times in different postal systems because the mails were not simply a method of moving things from Point A to Point B, but often subsidized for political or cultural reasons. This is especially true for remote areas with no common carrier freight service but a post office.

Subsidized parcel post is intended to encourage commerce via catalogue companies, and help rural and remote areas receive goods at reasonable cost instead of being held for ransom by the village store. There were always hackers, even a century ago, who abused the system and used it to excess.

### **They Built Better Than They Knew.**

The Americans started their parcel post system in 1912. Items not more than 50 pounds in weight could be mailed as parcels. Rural and remote residents immediately swamped the post offices of western USA with farm produce, shrubs and tree saplings,

machine parts, furniture, and anything else that didn't weigh more than 50 pounds or which could be broken down into smaller parts under the limit. Crops were shipped to market via parcel post, and the post office found itself shipping thousands of 50-pound sacks of corn or wheat.

The most famous use of parcel post is undoubtedly the construction of a bank in the rural village of Vernal, Utah, in 1919. The bank president, William Colthart, wanted to use specially-textured bricks rather than the standard red brick available locally, but they had to be imported. Common-carrier freighters charged \$2.50 per hundred pounds to deliver to Vernal. The parcel post rate, however, was only \$1.50 per hundred pounds. The post office was promptly buried under countless packages of bricks, not exceeding the 50 pound limit for parcel post [7]. The postal officials then issued an order that not more than 20 pounds of parcels per day could be delivered to any Vernal citizen. This was bypassed when the bank began addressing packages to different citizens of the community. They were happy to assist since a bank would be a vital service in the village. Postal officials then issued another edict stating that deliveries could not be made to individual addresses if the parcels ultimately all ended up at the bank. This ultimately did stop the flow of bricks, but by the time the postal bureaucracy had moved into action the bank was completed and the whole thing was moot.

The bank is still there, now the Zion National Bank, on the southwest corner of Vernal Avenue and Main Street.

About 70 years later, in 1988, the town of Wainwright, Alaska, on the shore of the Arctic Ocean, decided to have a new boat dock built. The contractor calculated his low bid in part by having the USPS ship the construction materials. To be more specific, the manufacturer in Anchorage mailed north the concrete blocks at \$4.33 per block. The USPS actual shipping cost was \$50.94 per block, via a private air courier. The USPS did not, however, prohibit the shipment. Why not I don't know, but the contractor was able to build the boat dock as planned.

Not quite in the same category as shipping buildings by post, but close enough as made no difference to the post office, were shipments of individually wrapped bricks. With the advent of parcel post in the USA in January 1913 a brick manufacturer sent a wagonload of bricks, one at a time, as samples to sales agents. The U.S. Post Office charge was 18 cents postage per brick, whereas express companies charged 25 cents each. The postmaster at South River, New Jersey, was quoted as worrying that other brick manufacturers would follow suit [9].

A month later, Chicago was hosting the Clay Products Exposition, from February 26 to March 8, 1913. This was a trade association

of brick manufacturers. As a publicity stunt, the Exposition officials solicited each of the 25,000 brick companies in the USA to mail one brick to them, out of which a house would be built on the fairgrounds. No big deal for the sending post offices, but the Chicago posties must have been hard pressed in more ways than one [10].

### **Bulk Goods.**

So many bulk items were packaged individually and sent off farms that it isn't worth the trouble of documenting them. Grain, potatoes, baby chicks, and other items were, in fact, legitimate use of the parcel post system. Somewhat more abusive of the rules were the three Idaho mines which began shipping ore concentrates by parcel post in January 1914. It was cheaper to bundle up the ore in 50-pound parcels than send it in bulk by freighter [13].

The Canadian Post Office had its run-ins with postal hackers, especially in the Arctic. Originally, when Canada's parcel post began in 1914 (or 1859, depending on how you define 'Canada' and 'parcel'), the limit was 6 pounds (and 66 different rates), but this was later raised [14]. During the early 1930s, someone began shipping sugar airmail to Fort Vermilion, Alberta (in the extreme north of the province) in 50-pound bags. The postal rate was 7 cents per pound but the cost of flying the shipment in was 50 cents per mile. Accordingly an order was issued from Ottawa banning

airmail shipments of bulk sugar [1].

### **Moving House Made Cheap.**

Circa 1915, Mrs. Annie Olsen moved from Seattle, Washington, to Quinault. She calculated that it was easier to move her furniture and household goods as parcels. She mailed altogether 337 pounds at a cost of \$4.62 in stamps. She said that a private contractor would have charged \$20. The kitchen stove went in a barrel, and items such as the dining room table and rocking chair apparently went as themselves alone [6].

70 years later, Richard Schill moved from Massachusetts to Hawaii, a long-distance move if there ever was one. He discovered that he could save \$6,000 by mailing his household goods. He did so in 131 parcels, averaging 64 pounds each [2]. The packages included a lawnmower and, like Mrs. Olsen all those decades before, a rocking chair.

### **Live Freight: Small Children And Other Animals.**

It didn't take long for Americans to exploit the loopholes in their new parcel post system. First off the mark was the rural letter carrier in Ohio who accepted a 10.75 pound baby boy for delivery on January 26, 1913. The parents mailed him one mile down the

road to his grandmother, at a cost of 15 cents for postage, with \$50 insurance [11]. This seems to have been more a publicity stunt, in my opinion, as a 1-mile walk would be nothing to farm folk but 15 cents was more money in those days. I have my doubts about the veracity of this transaction.

More legitimate perhaps, was a year later on February 4, 1914, when a two-year-old boy went from Stratford, Oklahoma, to Wellington, Kansas, from his grandmother to his aunt [12]. He wore a tag about his neck with 18 cents postage paid, and rode on the train in the mail car with the postal clerks. It was said he shared his lunch with the posties en route, which immediately leads one to ask if postage was paid on that as well.

5-year-old May Peirstorff was mailed on 1914-02-19 from Grangeville, Idaho to her grandmother in Lewiston, Idaho. The girl was classified at the 'baby chick' agricultural rate, which saved her impecunious parents the cost of a train fare. It helped that the railroad postal clerk was her cousin Leonard Mochel, who set up the deal and looked after her in the mail car. When word got out, postal officials threatened Mochel for having passengers in the mail car. The matter was quietly settled when the Peirstorffs agreed to retroactively buy a half-price ticket [5].

American postal officials subsequently announced that it was not legal to mail children [8]. Subsequently, however, meant June

1920, in a statement that children were not acceptable as parcels at the 'live animals' rate.

In Canada, the postal clerks at West Flamborough, Ontario, were presented in 1955 with a 6-year-old girl named Linda Doyle, who had labelled herself and added a 3-cent stamp, then asked to be mailed to her Aunt Maud in nearby Hamilton. She was persistent, and, so the story goes, was driven in to Hamilton with the afternoon mail to the main post office there [17]. Her aunt was telephoned to pick her up, and Linda went home via her uncle's car. I suspect that one of the posties involved must have known her and talked to her parents, as it is unlikely she would have been allowed to go on her own say-so. Again, I am suspicious of the veracity of this story.

The dawn of the air age meant parcels would be expedited by air, and inevitably someone would test the limits there. A Belgian journalist, M.G. Lantschere, saved 40% on air fare between Brussels and Croydon, England, by shipping himself as an air parcel. The catch was that he had to ride in the windowless mail compartment and saw nothing of the scenery below [16]. The fact that his occupation was given as journalist leads me to wonder if this too was a publicity stunt.

Another story of live freight dates to 1865 in Greenock, Scotland. I have reason to question its truth but it is too humourous to omit. A Highlander, under the influence of whiskey, was doubtful of his ability to walk home to his village. He staggered into the post office and asked the clerk how much it would cost to mail himself home. The clerk handled it with tact. Instead of arguing with the drunk and possibly winding up in a brawl, the clerk merely quoted him a price of 2p per ounce. The Highlander carefully digested this, and decided to try some cheaper method to get home [15].

### **Critters By Post.**

Shipping animals by post is allowed under some circumstances. Baby chicks and packaged bees are perhaps the most common, but aquarists ship fish in the warm season quite commonly.

Circa 1957, R.J. Roden, Headmaster of Maplewell Hall School in Leicester, England, bought a pony from a farmer in nearby Quorn. The cost to ship the animal home by truck was L2, more money then than now. He found a post office regulation that allowed any object within reason to be mailed at a shilling a mile, plus an extra shilling 'exceptional express delivery' charge. Roden saved L1 and 14 shillings by this method. It is recorded that he pasted the stamps to the pony's flank, then handed the reins to the postmaster. The postmaster then walked the animal 5 miles to its destination in about 1.5 hours. He was quoted as saying that: "*It*

*was a lovely morning for a walk, but I hope nobody gets the idea to mail an elephant."* [3]. What baffles me at this distance in time was why Roden didn't just ride the pony home. The 5 miles was hardly an epic journey.

In 1979, someone managed to dump off a rooster in the Elora, Ontario, post office with a tag and stamps around its neck. There was no return address, so the post office delivered it anyway, even though against regulations [18].

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## PHANTASY VERSUS PHILATELY

by Dale Speirs

While searching through newspaper indexes at the University of Calgary Library, as part of ongoing philatelic writing I do, I came across the following letter to the editor of THE TIMES (London), in the 1922 March 30 issue, page 13. This was part of a controversy that had arisen when the British Postmaster General proposed that commercial advertisements be printed on the backs of postage stamps as a useful revenue source.

The writer of this particular letter was none other than Lord Dunsany, the famous fantasy author, standing on his dignity.

*“Sir: I read in the Press that it is intended to put advertisements on the backs of postage stamps. However unavailing it be, I should not like my protest to be absent when such an indignity is suffered by our country.”*

*“The Crown of England is represented on all our stamps, as well as various emblems of the dignity and might of the Empire. To link these with the kind of words that we know only too well is to detract ludicrously from that dignity.”*

*“The Postmaster General evidently believes that this business will pay but loss of dignity does not work out in the end as a paying*

*concern; and these times of the breaking of nations, when government everywhere is losing some of its grip, are the most ill-chosen of all for making the emblems of authority and tradition ridiculous by putting them side by side with things that are absurd or contemptible.”*

*“Your obedient servant, Dunsany.*

*Dunsany Castle, County Meath, March 27”*

## WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

2000-10-23

by Dale Speirs

Today is a Monday, the start of my weekend, since I work Friday to Sunday. The University of Calgary advertised a lecture today at 09h00 by Canadian novelist Robert Sawyer. His topic, delivered to a creative writing class of young co-eds temporarily augmented by the presence of greying Baby Boomers, was “The future is already here: Is there a place for science fiction in the 21st Century?”. There were about 40 people attending, about 30 of them the regular students, and the rest of us being outlanders who saw the public announcement in the campus newspaper.

For some strange reason, about a half dozen people had Asimov paperbacks on their desks. Different titles, too, so it couldn't have been some class reading project.

I almost didn't recognize Sawyer when he walked into the room. He is a frequent visitor to Calgary's annual SF convention ConVersion, so I have seen him on many panels. But then he was always nicely arrayed in a suit and tie. Today, here on campus, he was casual in a pullover and baggy pants, with a stubble beard, and looking like he just came in from re-painting the backyard fence. Whether at a convention or here, Sawyer has a good clear voice, and speaks rapidly from prepared notes. No mumble-mumble that only the first row can hear.

Sawyer was introduced by a professor whose name I didn't catch (she was a mumbler audible only to the first row), but I did hear her say she was doing a sabbatical project on his novels. It might be that Sawyer has Arrived, with a capital A, or it might be that all the obvious candidates have been done to death so she had to psychoanalyze him instead of doing yet another Margaret Atwood thesis.

Sawyer got right into the theme of his topic by asking a rhetorical question. Was SF a literature of the 20th Century, as firmly tied to it as Gothics are to the 19th Century? Answer to come in a moment, but he then veered into the subject of mystery stories.

All but a few mysteries moralize that crime does not pay. The whole point of a murder mystery is to tell how the culprit was brought to justice. Nonetheless, they haven't reduced the crime rate.

The job of SF writers in the 21st Century, the job that will keep the genre alive, will be to look at technology and change with a skeptical eye. Sawyer said that such SF must tread a line between boosterism (he mentioned Jerry Pournelle as a technophilic example) and doom-saying (such as Michael Crichton).

SF writers can discuss the things that scientists dare not for fear of losing research grants. The example used was the team that cloned Dolly the sheep, who insisted that it was a matter of animal husbandry and nothing more. Sawyer posits the not-improbable scenario of a multibillionaire aged 35, who drinks, eats, and smokes too much, and has been told he will be dead by 55 if he doesn't reform. So the plutocrat clones himself, puts the baby out for adoption to save the expense of raising it, and waits about 15 years. He then kidnaps his clone and murders him for his spare parts, installing a fresh liver, heart, lungs, and miscellaneous into himself with no fear of transplant rejection.

As a second example, Sawyer, who is a Torontonian, told of talking with a nuclear engineer from Ontario Hydro, who insisted

that their reactors didn't need a backup plan because nothing could ever go wrong. The engineer had to say that; he would lose his job otherwise. An SF author can view with alarm, and point with concern. In fact, the public has accepted the SF writers' view of nuclear power, which is why nuclear plant orders have fallen to near extinction.

Why is literary hard SF dying? Sawyer suggested that while hard SF is not escapism, the general public thinks it is because of the STAR WARS legacy. Science fact is exciting, but presented to the public as boring third-person passive, which is how scientists are trained to write research reports. This removes them from empathy with the reader.

Literary SF, said Sawyer, is in the danger of repeating moral messages from the 1960s. Literary SF is declining in the face of competition from media SF, just as written pornography declined after the videocassette was mass marketed. But even media SF is not immune if it stagnates. STAR TREK has fossilized; it was revolutionary in the 1960s when it was dangerous to portray blacks and women as equals. It is still making a big to-do because they have blacks and women as equals in the 1990s shows, long after black politicians are too numerous to count and women are accepted in business and public life.

So what will the successful SF of the new century be? Sawyer

first mentioned its failure as prediction. SF writers missed the idea that the Moon would be abandoned after only twelve men had walked on it. No one imagined the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union. The Internet was completely unexpected; the standard of SF was the giant computer dominating the world from a central point, not students with laptops (here Sawyer pointed to a couple of people in the front row of the classroom). His definite point was that no one can make predictions of 50 years from now. The world of 2050 will be magic to us, in fulfillment of Clarke's Law: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

To survive, said Sawyer, literary SF will have to move away from far future stories, and must assert itself as a contemporary literature. SF must send a message that the scientific method is the only rational way to deal with the future. Not astrology, not New Age, nor psychics, and nothing from the supernatural.

Getting down to the level of the individual author, Sawyer says commercial success is not the ability to write well but the ability to write for a large enough market of readers. He said there are many better writers than him, but they only have a few hundred readers interested in their themes or works, whereas he has tens of thousands. He said he is trending to works of philosophical fiction. In writing a novel, he writes 125,000 words and then throws out 25,000.

Sawyer is definitely a good choice for SF concons looking for a Guest of Honour. He is a good public speaker, which many if not most authors are not (which is why I don't go to readings). He has definite opinions, well supported by facts and notes, and is not shy of verbal combat. Dare I say that he is Canada's answer to Harlan Ellison?

**YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY: A SHORT AND INCOMPLETE SURVEY OF CONRUNNING MATERIALS (PART 3)**

by Garth Spencer

(Garth may be contacted at Box 15335, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 5B1)

**The Worldcon Runner's Guide.**

Joyce Scrivener advised in July 1998 that Ross Pavlac, of Evanston, Illinois, edited the WORLDCON RUNNER'S GUIDE from 1992 or 1993 as a project of the World SF Society.

**ConComCon.**

These small Northwest cons were started by Northwest Convention League members about 1993, basically to share ideas between members of different convention communities in the Pacific Northwest. The latest ConComCon will be held this year by Larry Baker. Contact address is ConComCon 7, c/o/ 2100 Old Lakeway Drive, Bellingham, Washington 98226.

**Actually Asking For Advice (1993).**

Kingcon, a convention started up in eastern Canada, briefly surfaced in GEnie's conventions-and-conrunning topic area in 1993. The following request was posted on a GEnie newsgroup and forwarded to me by one of my friends: *"I am one of the organizers for Kingcon, a small convention being held this summer in Saint John, New Brunswick (Canada). I am looking for ideas and a basis for comparisons with other cons. Kingcon's expected attendance is only 4-600, with a budget that might not even qualify to be called a shoestring. What I am looking for are budgeting and fundraising ideas. I am also interested in getting a copy of your programming, and perhaps even a listing of contacts for special guests. This information would be used by*

*Kingcon and also be made available for any other convention that asked for it. If you wish to help this poor benighted soul, you can contact him at: Kingcon, MPO Box 1212, Saint John, N.B., Canada, E2L 4G7, attn: Brian McGee or by E-mail at: 860473m@axe.acadiau.ca ."*

Three more convention publications appeared in 1994: David Medinnus' article "How to Run a Dealers Room"; Linda Pilcher's compilation of notes from other Orycon organizers, "Auntie Linda's Guide to Convention Running"; and the SMOFCon 8 proceedings, including articles such as Joe Rico's "The Treasurer's Job".

### **Wanna Buy A WorldCon? (Pavlac, 1995).**

Some interesting articles, at least for conrunners, appeared in VOYAGEUR, the 1994 WorldCon daily zine. "Wanna Buy a WorldCon?" in issues #2 and #5 was later incorporated in "Things to Think About When Voting For a WorldCon Bid", posted at [www.boston-baden.com/smofs/smofs.html](http://www.boston-baden.com/smofs/smofs.html).

Two more articles and a general conrunning guide appeared in 1995: Al Macintyre's "Thoughts on Cincinnati Game Con", Laurie Mann's "Problems That Can Plague a WorldCon", and Dana Ryan Windsor's THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SCI-FI/FANTASY CONVENTION MANAGEMENT.

### **Windsor's Guide (1995).**

Windsor's conrunning guide was first available on paper by mail order, and later available on-line at Chaz Baden's site. This work was apparently based on the experiences of media fans at an event titled WhoLucination 1. Like THE LITTLE GOLDEN GUIDE, Windsor's guide displayed a few notions that slightly inexperienced, slightly uninformed mediafans might have, if they have no basis for comparison: "*First, take a look at the event that you are to be running and see what you can potentially make of it. After you have resolved the above, the next step is to create a target budget based on what you propose to do. Make a list of the major expenses of your event. This will start with target amounts for your site or hotel, guests, program, promotion, transportation, equipment (things like audio and video gear, radios, etc.) and miscellaneous expenses. ... What you are doing is setting up a wish list ... Be ready to scale back things if you need to as the event approaches. The most important things are to put together the best estimate, work to meet it, and to stay practical in your expectations.*"

### **Convention Newsgroups, Listservs, And Web Pages.**

When the Internet happened to fandom, fannish newsgroups sprang up, including [rec.arts.sf.fandom](mailto:rec.arts.sf.fandom), [rec.arts.sf.conventions](mailto:rec.arts.sf.conventions)

(which seems to have disappeared), and alt.fandom.conventions (still in operation). So did listservers such as SMOFs and InterSmofs, a listserv focused on large conventions in Europe.

When the World Wide Web happened to fandom, a number of fans discovered Web publishing. The main repositories for convention articles are Chaz Baden's site and the FANAC site in the USA, plus the BEST OF CONRUNNER and www.smof.com sites maintained by Chris O'Shea in Britain. Chaz Baden's own articles on his Web site include: "Daily Newszine Baby Steps" (1994/95), and articles on Webmastering for a convention. I set up a modest site myself at a Freenet in Vancouver, and discovered that just keeping your links up to date can demand more time and attention than you have to spare.

### **"Conventions Are Businesses" (Not).**

A thread in December 1996 on rec.arts.sf.fandom focused on the question "What is a good convention?". This was sparked by a comment from someone named Wilson that "conventions are businesses".

Ulrika O'Brien wrote: "Good people makes a good con. It's a fundamental truth. Yes, I'd been meaning to get to this point, because it is fundamental to the distinction between a fannish con and any business, be it service, or product oriented. ... "

*"By contrast, a convention does not control its "product". It has absolutely no way to guarantee that it can deliver good people for their own mutual enjoyment, because "good people" is a subjective and individuated judgement, and because a convention cannot make people attend. It can't check its complete inventory (membership) until the product has already been delivered, and there is no way to check inventory quality in advance of sale."*

*"In the end, the "consumers" and the "suppliers" are one and the same, and the most a convention committee can do is make the most agreeable circumstance for those people to convene in, and hope they show up. ... "*

*"And because a convention does not control its most fundamental "product", i.e. good attendees, it seems to me a great mistake to regard a con as on all fours with any business, except possibly farming."*

Zev Sero replied December 17, 1996: "I can think of a few other businesses that operate under these same conditions. A sex-on-premises venue (e.g. a sauna) is selling the presence of other customers who will find each other attractive. ... Despite this, a sauna is clearly a business, so your analysis doesn't hold. That doesn't mean I disagree with your point, that cons are not businesses."

## THE RHYMER GROUP

by Martha Shivers

1613 West Jackson Street

Knoxville, Iowa 50138

The Rhymer Group is a writing organization started back in 1887 as a round robin "letter ring" to bring hearing-impaired people into a circle of folks who were understanding and helpful. Included here is a short resume by Ina L. Millenchamp, who was the Captain of such a group when I was asked to join in 1976.

It all began in 1887 when Dr. Alexander Graham Bell established the Volta Bureau, a centre of information about deafness. In 1889, he began publication of THE VOLTA REVIEW, a monthly magazine dealing with the educational and social problems of the deaf and hard of hearing. Wanting to lessen the terrible loneliness of the isolated deafened, the editor, Josephine B. Timberlake, in 1924, appointed Laura Stoval, a member of her staff, to establish correspondence circles and encourage socialibilities among the Volta family. The groups were limited to ten members, and each group had a captain, or leader. Each circle conducted its own round robin.

The first group, states Mrs. Millinchamp, was christened "Welikeit", and it most certainly was enjoyed as the friendly association continued. About 1935, several student-poets got

together and decided to continue independently under the name of "Rhymer". A captain was appointed to pilot the barque, and others formed the crew. It was not necessarily connected with the deafness programme, but Ina was hearing impaired.

The first captain was Miss Katherine Grace Wadleigh of Toronto, a retired teacher of lip reading, well known at Volta Bureau and in educational circles.

Rhymer assignments have ranged all the way from the simple lyric to polyphonic prose, the sonnet, blank and free verse, even inventing our own forms. We've dug deeply into the history of poetry, sometimes writing prose articles of different phases. Many of the members have had their writings printed in little magazines. In more recent years, the members have had their literary children printed into little booklets at their own expense.

Assignments are given for the year, and personal letters are included with the letter-ring. The critiques, while stern in past years, have mellowed and are more encouraging. Only six members are the nucleus, and the Good Ship makes port every two months. While the original purpose was to help the deaf alleviate their loneliness in times of lesser communications, the event evolved into learning experiences and a broadening of friendships.

# TORONTO WINS 2003 WORLDCON BID

At the Chicago 2000 Worldcon, Toronto was successful in its bid for the 2003 event. Torcon 3 will happen from August 28 to September 1. Guests of Honour are George R.R. Martin (Pro), Mike Glyer (Fan), Frank Kelly Freas (Artist), and Spider Robinson (Toastmaster). GoHst of Honour is the late Robert Bloch, who had been a GoH at both previous Torcons in 1948 and 1973.

Membership rates (until March 30, 2001):	
Supporting,	C\$60/US\$40
Attending,	C\$170/US\$115

The voting for site selection was as follows:

Toronto	1375
Cancun	247
No preference	56
None of the above	8
Write-in	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1698</b>

Torcon's mailing address is: Torcon 3  
Box 3, Station A  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada, M5W 1A2



Now the hard work really begins.  
Be careful what you wish for; you may get it.