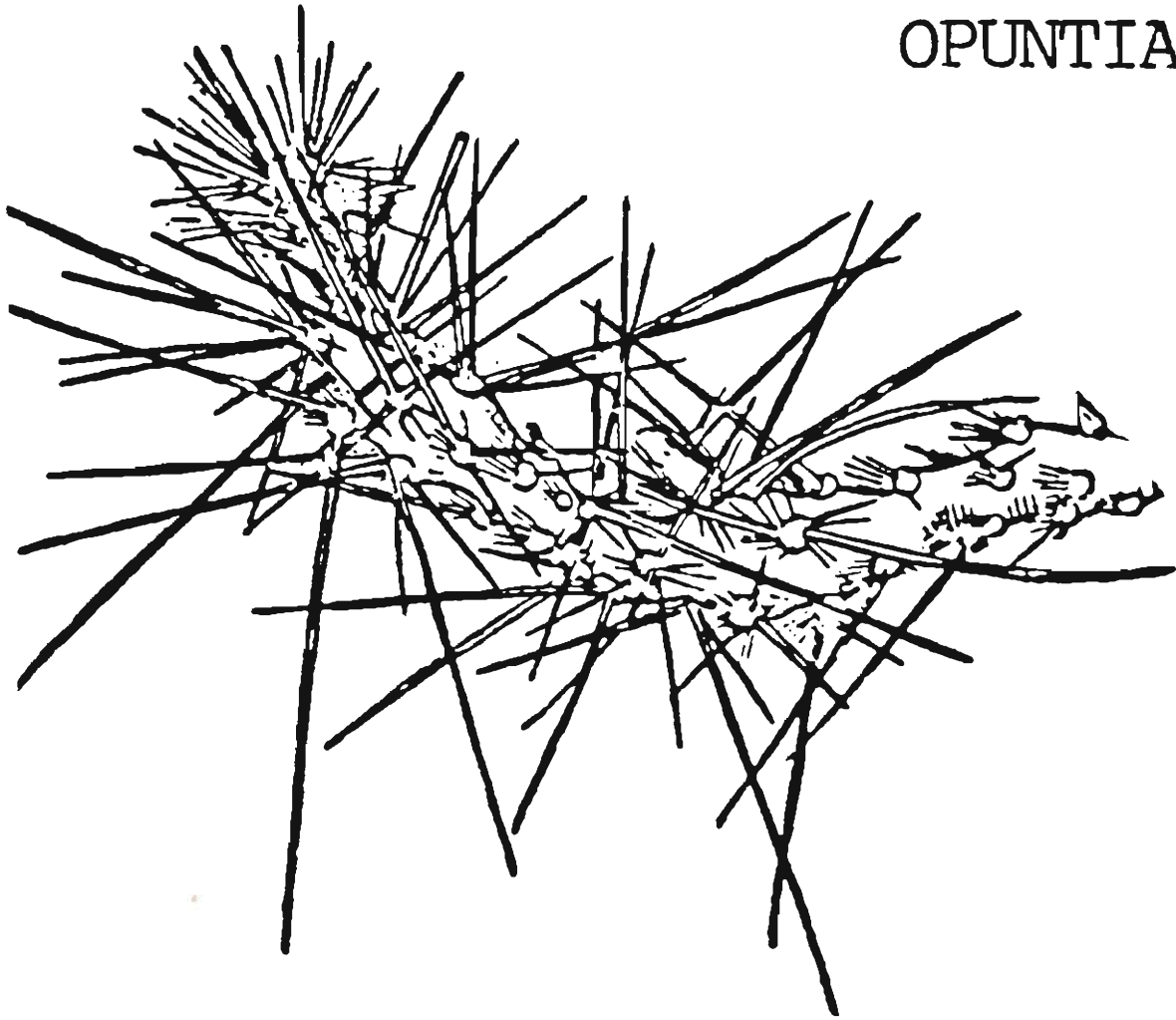


OPUNTIA #8



ISSN 1183-2703

OPUNTIA is published irregularly by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. It can be had for \$1 per copy, letter of comment, or trade for your zine.

ART CREDIT: The front cover depicts Opuntia pulchella, as done by an unknown artist, and is from the 1920 book "The Cactaceae: Descriptions and Illustrations of Plants in the Cactus Family".

EDITORIAL: This issue goes to the printer May 8. I have no doubt that the following post will bring letters and zines that should have been mentioned here. It also is a rule that when I'm short of copy and desperately look to fill those blank pages, all the locs at hand will be on postcards or a ¼-page letter. Conversely, when the issue is filled up two weeks before it goes to the printer, all the locs will be two closely-written pages of excellent material that I really should publish but must waih. Such is life so full of care.

Locs, by the by, are not necessarily printed in the next issue but rather the next issue of the particular fraction. That is, locs on #7.5 would appear in #8.5, not #8 or #8.1.

Speaking of locs, ignore Garth Spencer's old address on page 9. His COA is at hand; lawsuits and letter bombs should now be sent to him at #1, 930 East 8th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V5T 1T8.

Meanwhile, across the Great Lone Land, some news does trickle in. Dave Panchyk advises that one more issue of NEOLOGY is due out of Edmonton, but may be the last one as ESPACAS is almost defunct (actually what he actually wrote was "is damn near dead"). SPINTRIAN is dead or close as makes no difference.

On a more cheerful note, ConVersion 9 will run in Calgary July 17 to 19. Memberships are \$35 from ConVersion, Box 1088, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2K9. On the national scene, Convention goes June 27-28, being Wilfcon 8 by another name. \$5 supporting, \$16 attending, via 6 - 69 Donald Street, Kitchener, Ontario N2B 3G6. The Aurora awards will be at this con.

Looking ahead, Conadian is US\$25/C\$30 for supporting and US\$75/C\$85 for attending (I'd like to know how the exchange rates were calculated on that; probably GST and triple-E reform were included.) Write to Conadian at Box 2430, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4A7.

OPUNTIA 8.1 is pretty much laid out already, being my zine reviews. Garth will occupy #9 with the next installment of his history. By then, I should know if there is enough money left in my account after property taxes are paid at the end of June. The City of Calgary kept its rise to 2.9%, but both the public and the Catholic school boards increased their property tax by 9%. However, my car is paid for in September, so that will free up part of my paycheque for OPUNTIA. (And in 1997, when the mortgage is burned, I'll go to full colour for OPUNTIA.)

Elsewhere, the Travelling Unity Show rolls on its way, unimpeded by budgets, premiers, or the public. Joe Clark, the Unity Minister, is thinking about retiring after twenty years of politics. The plebisite in the Northwest Territories brought the new territory Nunavut a bit closer to creation; the Inuit expect to have their homeland by 1999.

by Garth Spencer

Vancouver's fanhistory is not really lost in the mists of time, but the early documentation is fragmented. The earliest, and rather isolated, mention of Vancouver is in Donald A. Wollheim's 1936 report in *Astounding*, on something called *The Canadian Science Fiction Fan ...* which has not been attested to by any other source. Dale Speirs tells me that the August 1952 *Amazing* mentions a club called the Hibited Men, c/o one Norman Browne in Vancouver. It appears that Vancouver's fanhistory precedes anything anywhere else in Canada. (*Organized* fandom, on the other hand, seems to have appeared first in Toronto.)

Early (and isolated) fans in B.C. include Nils Helmer Frome, a fanartist and fanpublisher who moved around southwestern B.C. from 1936 to 1958, and Bob Gibson, who did on-stencil covers and fillos for Les Croutch's *Light* (alternating with John Cockcroft). Frome published two editions of *Supramundane Stories* out of Fraser Mills, in 1937 and 1938, and did an issue of *Fantasy Pictorial* for the May 1938 First National SF Convention in Newark, N.J. Speirs tells me Frome was the first Canadian to publish an SF zine. Frome is documented in Sam Moskowitz' 1989 Mossashuck Press monograph, "Howard Phillips Lovecraft and Nils Helmer Frome", and probably in *The Immortal Storm* and Harry Warner Jr.'s *All Our Yesterdays*. Michael Dann, a member of BCSFA, looked up Frome's family and wrote a Frome biography for *New Canadian Fandom* in the 80 s.

In 1946 Bob Gibson moved from B.C. to Kapuskasing, Ont. Gibson gafiated before 1948, but was GoH at ONOCon 1 (1985). There have been rumours of a Vancouver club in the 40 s, but the rumours are hard to track down. At any rate, it seems that Frome was not in contact with any organized fandom in his area. A 1950 s club in Vancouver is hard to attest, other than by word of mouth; a friend in Victoria tells me that there was such a club, publishing a fanzine, which included Al Purdy (the Canadian poet) as a member.

OLD GUARD (Archeozoic)

(These geologic divisions for BCSFA's historical periods are a gag I've "borrowed" from Donna McMahon, who came up with them in *BCSFAzine* in 1986.)

We jump now to the late 1960 s. For context, it might help to visualize BCSFA events happening in what was now a Pacific port city of over 1 million people (roughly half the population of B.C.) Greater Vancouver incorporates several smaller cities, two universities (Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia), and some colleges, e.g. Langara and Capilano. This provides a fairly large fan population. Shipping, manufacturing industries and services for a large population mean a diversified economic base, even in the worst of times. In terms of attitude and anthropological culture, B.C. in general and the Lower Mainland in particular bear the reputation Southern California bears in the U.S.

In 1968, Claire Toynbee and Maynard Hogg started a club later known as SFFEN at the University of British Columbia. Mike Bailey indicates the club didn't really get going until they obtained an office in the Student Union Building.

At the 1969 Clubs Day, SFFEN recruited about 40 - 50 members, largely through the efforts of Daniel Say (he of many polls and questionnaires). Ed Beauregard met his future wife, Norma, for the first time. And the club proposed to produce a fanzine. In order to gather funds, they put on a film (One Million Years B.C.). It turned out that the club had to use all its money within the year, or the remainder would be absorbed by the Alma Mater Society for general revenue. (Apparently it is standard practice for student unions to dole out money to student clubs, grudgingly, then absorb the leftovers at the end of the year.) After November, according to Ed Beauregard, the office hosted some lively Monday- night discussion groups. The

club thought of getting Isaac Asimov to come and lecture at U.B.C., but he wrote back that he wouldn't fly.

So the B.C. SF Society was conceived in Jan. or Feb. 1970 as a dummy/front organization, to which fans paid dues, with a bank account off-campus. The original signing officers were Maynard Hogg and Ed & Norma Beauregard. At the end of 1970 or so, this group ceased to be associated with the university club. (The original purpose had been accomplished – *Stage One*, a fanzine, had been published in March 1970).

Early in January 1970 (Ed Beauregard writes) I produced Volume II, no. 1 of the *UBC SFFEN Newsletter*. Included in this issue was a list of members, a list which it is worth spending a few minutes going over.

...

The core group, the dedicated fans who almost lived in the club office, included such people as Daniel Say, Bob Bells, Mike Bailey, Stan Talarczyk, Ken Stairs, Brent Maclean, Maynard (Hogg), and Norma and I.

Dan Say was unquestionably the most energetic, the most vocal, and the most enthusiastic of our group. He seemed to have embraced the concept of fandom with almost religious fervour. His 'conversation' was essentially an ongoing monologue filled with humour, insult, sarcasm and just plain bullshit. His appearance today is unchanged from U.B.C. days, and among callow students he was certainly a sight to behold. His perpetual air of superiority offered no offense, since it was coupled with the most incredible behaviour, which could not fail to leave one laughing hysterically. I became one of his favourite targets, and the verbal jousting did much to sharpen my own skills.

Mike Bailey was nowhere near as active in the club as he later became. I recall him chiefly offering encouragement and excellent ideas in an offhand, almost apologetic manner. His was the voice of reason,

and towards the end of the year it frequently made little impression.

### The Proterozoic Era

In March 1971, the first off-campus meeting of the B.C. SF Association was held to formally organize the club, and to promote a convention. A local TV personality, Chuck Davis, became a member. The Elron Awards were established this year, to commemorate the year's worst contributions to SF.

The first Vancouver SF con was held on April 9 - 10, 1971, in the Georgia Hotel, with Ursula LeGuin as GoH. 70 - 100 people attended this gala event, and June conreports claimed "we did OK", although Charles Brown's report in *Locus* was largely unfavourable. The con did not break even, but no profit was expected or intended, and the loss was split evenly.

In 1972, another con was held on Feb. 18 - 19, at the Biltmore, with Philip K. Dick as GoH. About 100 people attended; the con featured films and costuming. This one held no Elron Awards, for some reason.

Most of the U.B.C. fen graduated or dropped out this year, and a lull followed. The club foundered in the following academic year.

BCSFA revived in 1973; former members suggested reviving activities, over the phone, but things didn't start to happen until all of 32 Vancouver fen met each other at that year's Bellingham convention, of whom the U.B.C. crowd knew just seven (including Fran Skene, columnist Michael Walsh, and TV personality Chuck Davis). Mike Bailey proceeded to get the con's mailing list from Pauline Palmer, the chair, and he contacted the Vancouver members.

Informal meetings were held on June 27 and August 10 at Pat Burrows' house, featuring news of Torcon II, books by Michael G. Coney, and a call for articles for Mike Bailey's zine. A newsletter was

printed up on August 18. The first *BCSFA Newsletter* came out Sept. 15, produced by Mike Bailey.

Some British Columbians went to Torcon II in September, including writer Michael G. Coney, Chuck and Edna Davis, Daniel Say, Mike Bailey, Brent Maclean, Pat Burrows and David George. Pat Burrows remembers that several former UBC SFFEN were saying, "Gee, we ought to do something like that," but weren't about to do anything very soon.

In October Fran Skene and Al Betz attended and were exposed to group stories and zany activities. The first large meeting that month was held at Chuck and Edna Davis' place, with 35 people; previously attendance averaged around 10 to 15. V-Con 3 was mooted at this point, but no definite plans were undertaken, not even a definite choice of name.

V-Con became real when Michael Walsh announced it, with full details, in his newspaper column. (Maybe that's what it takes sometimes ... ) Pat Burrows also remembers having a hand in getting it off the ground.

#### The Cambrian Period:

V-Con 3 was held at the Georgia Hotel, on Feb. 22 - 24, 1974, with Frank Herbert as GoH. 400 people paid \$5 each to attend; interestingly, many people attended this con because they knew of Herbert from his mainstream writing. This con made money for a change (about \$500). John Thomson first showed his slides at this con (which became a continuing feature).

#### Now for politics!

Ed Beaugard indicates that there were administrative problems before V-Con 3; arguments over picking up mail, handling of funds, financial procedure at and after the con.

Pat Burrows indicates that as early as 1974, V-Con was meant as an all-purpose regional convention, and a common meeting ground for fans (and so, to a lesser extent, was BCSFA); but this intent was either not conveyed, or was forgotten in later years.

Not much information is forthcoming about disagreements between David George and Mike Bailey. The concom of V-Con 3 included David George and Mike Bailey as co-chairs (with Bailey doubling as treasurer), and Allen Dickson as publicity. George and Bailey began to have clashes about policy and procedure after V-Con.

As Bailey puts it, he was the one remaining signing officer to the BCSFA account, and "inputted" the funds to the con. David George somehow felt Bailey was "extorting" money from the club. Bailey claims that George also wanted to be president, and arbitrarily proclaimed that he was.

At any rate, for at least the rest of February, both men were putting out their own BCSFA newsletters, in addition to the official one. As it worked out, David had V-Con's mailing list, Mike had the money, and neither would give the other anything. At Mike's invitation, Ed Beaugard managed to talk them into handing over the records and receipts to him. The two made an agreement to conceal many of their arguments.

It seemed no longer to be possible to run BCSFA loosely, with no executive and only an informal newsletter. A committee was set up to write a formal constitution, chaired by Ed & Norma Beaugard and including David George, Mike Bailey, Gary Walker, Fran Skene, John Thomson, et al. Their document was filled with checks and balances, including a "censorship" provision. This was probably accepted in early 1974 at the Walsh's home, followed by the first regular BCSFA elections. (Among other history in *BCSFAzine* #100, Mike Bailey comments that he copyrighted the name "V-Con" and, although he sold it to BCSFA, they never re-registered it. You might think that Mr. Bailey was concerned with details that other fans simply ignored.)

It was about this time that, for protection from financial liability, BCSFAns tried to register the club with Victoria (i.e., the B.C. provincial government) under the B.C. Societies Act. Unfortunately, one of the pieces of rignarole they had to deal with was a rule conflicting with their name; a society labelled "British Columbia" anything, they were told, had to represent at least 70% of B.C.'s SF

fans. Similar red tape prevented their using a name incorporating "Vancouver." How are you going to prove how many SF fans there are in a given area, or population? How can anyone know?

So, in 1975, the Western Canadian SF Convention Committee Association was set up, mainly to limit the BCSFA executives' personal liability for convention finances. WCSFCCA was charged to license the V-Con name to convention committees that satisfied the WCSFCCA executives' criteria, and to carry funds forward from one year to the next. The name ("Western Canadian" etc.) annoyed some Edmonton and Winrupeg fans at first, until the background was explained.

Donna McMahon adds: "WCSFCCA was in the forming for years. It was first called just 'SF Convention Committee Association', but wasn't able to register under that name. WCSFCCA officially came into existence 11 May 1981."

Many years later, Al Betz explained to me that by the late 70 s, when the current WCSFCCA constitution and bylaws were finally passed, an idea was going around that the WCSFCCA organizers were trying to take over V-Cons; so in fact they went to some effort to avoid the appearance of imposing control on V-Cons.

#### The Ordovician Period:

V-Con 4 was held Feb. 21 - 23 in 1975 at the Sheraton Landmark Hotel, in downtown Vancouver, with Robert Silverberg as GoH and Mike Bailey as chair. (Silverberg chose this time to announce the end of his writing career; the concom got all upset, well a little bit, and felt they had to reschedule the announcement to the end of the con. You can see how much Silverberg has since given up writing.) 600 people attended; Vaughn Bodé is said to have made a brief appearance. The concom spent an average of \$6 per attendee. Ed Beaugard, who got a reputation later as a financial wizard, says this was the first con he worked at. He says, "The outstanding characteristic of this committee was how inappropriately chosen the committee members were. The treasurer could barely count, the publications person was illiterate, and I was in charge of programming, though I had never attended a single convention and

had little interest in the job. We somehow muddled through, and actually made a pretty decent profit." This came to \$700, out of which BCSFA subsequently bought a Gestetner machine.

At the October 1975 general meeting, there were presentations both for V-Con 5 and for the Westercon XXX bid.

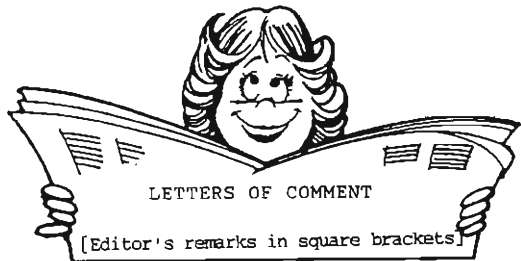
David George, of course, wanted to chair the next convention, V-Con 5. He had been a moving force in the Westercon 77 bid, and V-Con 5 was supposed to be a dry run for the Westercon. We had won the bid in the previous July ... and the V-Con 5 and Westercon committees were almost the same people. Because of David George's concern about financial liability, the convention was registered as the Wreck Beach Science Fiction Convention Committee Association (or such). (Ed B.)

\*

The Vancouver Comic Book Club seems to have formed rather later than BCSFA. "In 1975," Len Wong writes, "a fan named Terry Hamilton put on a few comic-book 'swap meets' at the Dunbar Community Centre. These took place approximately every three months, and seemed to be very successful." But the VCBC itself wasn't formed until 1977, with Len Wong and soon-to-be-BCSFAN Vaughn Fraser.

(to be continued)





FROM: Paula Johanson  
Box 7 Site 1 RR 1  
Legal, Alberta, TOG ILO

1992-3-9

OPUNTIA #7 was an interesting issue about three times over. I've read stuff from the Art Strike Manifesto before and each year on December 6 I refrain from creating art. This includes my fiction writing, crafts, and fancy cooking. My family gets macaroni and cheese, no frills. This serves two purposes: December 6 is the anniversary of the Montreal massacre where fourteen engineering students were killed and fourteen wounded by an anti-feminist. On this day, between memorial services and my own resolve to recognize "Art", I don't get word-one written or much creative work done. Ever hear of Bali? Island culture with no artists; every person does everything as well as possible. Beautiful fabrics and carvings abound; I'd like to see their buildings and homes.

As for an Art Lockout, it made me remember the City Council in Edmonton decided to spend 1% of building budgets on including art in new buildings. All the art is sculptures and murals. People are complaining about thousands of dollars spent on carved rock whatsis when workers need wages. (I know, apparently artists aren't worth wages.) Not one new building has put aside any of this 1% towards funding poetry readings, dance, wind harps, atr-

ium gardens, unique desserts, stained glass in ordinary office windows, elevator music, or spring flower distribution. Edmonton council has effectively defined Art for those of us who aren't from Bali. Art is sculpture (3-D or bas-relief), hard to understand, and costs ten of thousands of dollars at a minimum. It's not simply a prejudice against ephemeral or performance arts; for New Year's Eve, several ice sculptures were commissioned and demolished before melting could make them dangerous. Non-Art is Festival, or else it is unfunded. That's about it.

Art Sabotage and Poetic Terrorism: go, people, go! This is not destructive vandalism, not arson or assault. The closest I've come is facilitating monthly Poetry Readings in Victoria for two years. There were always three planned readers and up to six Open Mike readers who came in off the street. Some wonderful poetry and fiction got read, some real bad stuff, but it was all over quickly. It wasn't Poetic Terrorism; the audience expected to hear poetry, but it couldn't be planned or fall into a rut. One time we held a book launch when a local's book about the neighbourhood was published. Wine, cheese, Community Association board, Aldermen, and poets were all preening, in attendance. First we congratulated the happy author and he gave a short speech, then the first Open Mike reader took his turn. He proceeded to read a poem titled "Let's Fuck Pharaoh Up the Ass With a Dead Cat". It was a magic moment.

Bernie has just reminded me that I also set up some "Graffiti Without Guilt: Sidewalk Chalking Days" for the same community association. January, April, and most of the summer, on a weekend day I'd have boxes of chalk waiting beside a teapot, coffee, and juice. Donations more than covered the cost of drinks and chalk. Kids and parents were most of the participants though some poet/artist friends showed up. This too is not Poetic Terrorism, but it was a hoot to watch

people reading the sidewalks and turning around to follow drawings. It's also illegal. Yep! That way, if personal attacks are scrawled, the scrawler can be charged with a crime. The city clerk I spoke with sighed and said urgently, "Just wash off any personal attacks or really bad swearwords and don't tell me if you really do this thing or not." I think he was approaching retirement.

So! Who's going to Winnipeg in 1994? Are we going to ride a train from Vancouver to Winnipeg? Anyone interested?

[I don't know my schedule yet, but I'm hoping to arrive in Winnipeg a few days early to do some sightseeing, such as Louis Riel's grave. Any other train riders? Assuming, of course, that the trains will still be running.]

FROM: Chester Cuthbert  
1104 Mulvey Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3M 1J5

1992-3-8

OPUNTIA #7 is your most interesting issue to date from my point of view as a book collector, mainly because of Crad Kilodney and his article. As a fan of pulp writers like A. Merritt and Max Brand, I enjoy their story-telling ability better than I do that of more literary writers, though I respect the style of better masters of English like W.H. Hudson, Lord Dunsany, Lafcadio Hearn, Norman Douglas, and Edgar Allan Poe. The sheer power and narrative drive of prolific writers assists in keeping the reader enthralled. There are fashions in literary criticism, as in everything else, and it is possible that Frederick Faust ("Max Brand") may someday be studied as a genius, in spite of so much poor material in his voluminous output.

FROM: Harry Warner Jr.  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

1992-3-10

Crad Kilodney's article in OPUNTIA #7 gave me much delight. I suppose the fiction editors who were taken in by his hoaxes could claim one mitigating factor: fashions in fiction change and the writing style in some of the older stories may have been enough to cause their rejection before the editors had read far enough in the manuscript to recognize their overall excellence. However, if this is true, it is a serious indictment of those who think words should be put together in a certain way in 1992 and that the way words were put together in 1972 was a primitive and inferior early stage of the English language.

[Literary Darwinism, perhaps?]

I seem to remember having read about the Art Strike when it was brand new. The original article bothers me for seeming to lump together everything created on the tube or screen or paper or canvas as "art". This is an attitude that I don't think existed until the 1920s or thereabouts, when this and that intellectual began writing about the 'popular arts' like certain comic strips and Charlie Chaplin movies. Down through the ages, the arts had generally been creativity that brought little or no financial reward to the creators. I suspect that the same thing should hold true today, and we should get out of the habit of designating as artists anyone who draws pictures of merchandise for mail-order catalogues or composes a jingle for the Heartbeat of America's new commercial or emits a nine-volume Tolkien ripoff. The genuine artists are probably starving as their predecessors have always done, and won't become famous until they've been dead quite a few years.

[continued next page]



Romantic music is thriving as a zombie, if it's dead. Walt Disney's "Fantasia" has become the best-selling video of all time despite the fact that much of its soundtrack could qualify as music of the Romantic era. New movies that don't rely on rock for their scoring usually utilize music that imitates or borrows from the Romantic composers. Richard Strauss, a direct descendent of the Romantic line, is played constantly in concert halls, and a half dozen of his operas hold the stage, while his old rival Stravinsky, who gave up composing in the Romantic tradition after his first few opus numbers, is being rapidly forgotten. Wagner's Ring operas had the highest ratings of anything on public television the month they were televised from the Met on New York City's public television channel. The Maryland Symphony Orchestra, which plays its concerts in Hagerstown and programs mostly Romantic music conducted by Barry Tuckwell, has been staying solvent and attracting growing audiences while rock concerts by name groups are virtually extinct here.

As for the bravos for opera singers: at the bigger houses they exist because people are paid to yell them. The claque still survives in most major houses. The bravos that come free and spontaneously derive from the same impulses that cause people to yell at baseball games and horse races. Except for the most modest opera companies, a person who goes to an opera pays at least \$30 or \$40 a ticket, maybe much more. People no longer attend operas in the United States to advance their status in social circles as they did in the 19th century; now they go because they like opera. Some of them express themselves audibly when a high note or a sensational conducting job excites them. I make noises from time to time while alone in my house, because I'm thrilled by a particular moment in a performance on radio, television, or videocassette.

FROM: Garth Spencer  
1642B East 20th Avenue  
Vancouver, British Columbia V5N 2K8  
1992-3-7

Appreciated the Crad Kilodney story in #7. We need more hoaxing, in fandom as elsewhere. I find a problem with hoaxes and satires is that the audience is likely not to get the point, or appreciate it even if they do, and Kilodney seems to have run into the same reaction sometimes.

My brain cell kicked into gear the other day, and I realized that your OPUNTIA layout answered a question I was beginning to formulate about my next perzine. When I get SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG out, I can test my idea that eight or so letter-size pages, à la OPUNTIA, is the limit for a minimum-weight Canadian stamp.

[You are quite right. OPUNTIA is just a hair under 20 grammes, which is the limit for international mail. If I didn't mind paying higher postage for international mail, I could add a sheet or two to bring it up to the 30 gm limit for Canada and USA mail.]

I don't know if fandom collectively will never learn. If so, then a great deal of my time has been wasted. I started MAPLE LEAF RAG, my fanhistories, and my attempts to compile a conrunning manual on a few explicit assumptions, among them the proposition that fans can be educated, exposure to information is the important thing, and somebody had to take the trouble to document the patterns of goofiness we reproduce, and I was one of the few who would put themselves on the spot. Which brings me to my greater concern. How many of the uninstructed fans I am worried about are reading OPUNTIA?

[continued next page]

[None, I should think. My belief is that history is valuable for recording what has gone on before, and to remind future generations who it was (or were) that built the road they travel on. Your fanhistories will be of great value years from now when people start to wonder about the Good Old Days. As far as instructing fandom in how to do things properly, we know that out in the real world no one seems to learn from the past, so why should fandom be different? More important to my way of thinking is my belief that SF fandom is not yet a mature hobby, being only about sixty years old. You'll recall from Skeet's MLR that I was constantly going on about how we need national SF organizations in each country to sanction and guide (not control, just guide) local clubs, and in turn be guided by an international association. The aquarium hobby has this structure; no one orders local aquarists around and yet the guidance of FAAS and CAOAC result in clubs that are stabler than SF clubs. Stamp collecting began in the 1840s and accomplishes far more with its system of national societies under the international group FIP than SF does. When SF develops this kind of structure, then we will see fewer con blowouts or crudzines.]

When I took it on myself to scrape a fanhistory together, I found myself confined to a) any written material I could find, largely fanzines and program books, and b) anything that I could get correspondents to write. There were few contributors in category b), and I wanted to recognize them as scrupulously as I tried to attribute my other citations. You can do face-to-face, one-on-one interviews, I suppose, but off-the-cuff, consulte-conversation-style information is sometimes labelled Do Not Quote. Why? some fans seem frightened of writing on paper. It isn't related to the medioid print-is-dead mass movement. Think about the fact that documentation of fandom is only created by individuals on their own initiative. Think about the number of cons that fail to promote themselves, just for lack of thinking of a paper thing to do. Think about the number of cons, from the year dot, whose sum total of bookkeeping (I do not say account-

ing) consisted of a pile of unlabelled receipts in a shoebox. This is a common behaviour and personality type. This is not fandom by my definition. This is ersatz under the same name. I want fandom back!

[Again with FAAS, it has issued a book on how to run an aquarium show, sold to member clubs. I wrote this book, based on my experience on aquarium show committees. The book is sold by FAAS because fish clubs will buy it from FAAS instead of from a lone author. A conrunner's guide (and other books) would likewise sell better through a genuine national SF society able to promote the book with the society's prestige and non-profit status.]

Harry Andruschak: Dave Vereschagin eventually gafiated and vanished into the mists of Toronto.

Harry Warner: What became of the Clarkes? I was trying to pass tactfully over the fact that their marriage made in fandom did not last forever.

FROM: Ned Brooks  
713 Paul Street  
Newport News, Virginia 23605

1992-3-9

I probably would have ordered Kilodney's BLOOD-SUCKING MONKEYS FROM NORTH TONAWANDA for my silly-book collection, but the other titles seem a letdown by comparison. I just got BLACK SWINE IN THE SEWERS OF HAMPSTEAD by Hamilton.

The Art Strike nonsense is even sillier than the modern art it is aimed at. The Art Strike Manifesto, aside from the utter impossibility of its proposed solution to the world's problems, is simply wrong in stating that the effort currently expended on Art could be used to make the deserts flower. As for Polvi-

[continued next page]

kosiki, how could anyone read the line in his first paragraph about "the ones who should be silenced" without wondering just how he expects to "silence" anyone? Rack and rope? Cut out their tongues?

The Art Sabotage and literary hoaxes are great fun, though I am not convinced that they prove anything about the victims; remember Borges' story about the modern writer who wrote DON QUIXOTE. No matter how great a classic is, it's inevitably stuck in its own time and culture.

[But in all the English literature courses I took, from all my teachers, whether high school or university, I was constantly told that great stories are timeless, and are great no matter what era they are read in.]

FROM: Buck Coulson 1992-3-12  
2677w-500N  
Hartford City, Indiana 47348

The Art Strike manifesto strikes me as remarkably silly, not to mention juvenile. But then most self-proclaimed artists strike me the same way, so it's not surprising. Kilodney's being able to support himself by selling his own writing on the streets has nothing to do with how well he can write a story; it's a testimonial on how well he can sell his product.

Editors turning down 'classic' stories if submitted by an unknown writer are so old hat that I'm surprised it's still being done. How many of those rejections were by editors who did recognize the story and assumed it had been plagiarized? Plagiarism is a lot more common, especially in writing, than stories are. And with everyone being lawsuit conscious these days, how many editors would call a would-be author a plagiarist? Sometimes it even works; in SF there's a famous case of the plagiarism of an Anthony Boucher story that appeared in GALAXY under another

title and 'by' another author. This was after Gold had left the magazine.

Fanzine fandom has tried the educational approach on neofans, though in print rather than film. THE NEO-FAN'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM had at least four editions, by four different publishers, one publisher being Juanita and I. Written by Bob Tucker, thoroughly enjoyed by fans, and making no difference whatsoever in the attitude of neofans.

The flux in membership is partly because fans can move into different areas of fandom and become lost to former associates. It used to be fanzine fandom, convention fandom, and club fandom (listed in descending order of importance, at least in the opinion of fanzine fans). Now we've added media fandom, which itself is broken into a dozen or so different groups. Fanzine fandom is split among genzine fans and apas, convention fandom has hucksters and filkers in addition to the people who go to cons for the program (does anyone really do that?), and computer bulletin boards are thriving. All these have their own associations and in-group jokes. Juanita and I started as club fans, shifted to fanzine fandom, and are now hucksters and filkers, as well as being on con programs now and then. I'm becoming a sort of junior grade Harry Warner as far as letters go, so we have a sort of entry into several of the aspects, but a lot of fans shift totally from one to another, dropping old associates and finding new ones. Through son Bruce, we even have a wedge into club and gaming fandoms, and have been to media cons, largely because Gene DeWeese and I wrote a couple of "Man From U.N.C.L.E." books, and Juanita was a staunch supporter of Bjo Trimble in the old Star Trek letter-writing campaign.

FROM: Harry Andruschak  
 Box 5309  
 Torrance, California 90510-5309

Thanks for sending OPUNTIA #7. I'll have to pass on the topic of the Art Strike. I am not very visually oriented. As for my fanzines, I do use cover art, mostly because it is expected. I do not buy art. So the whole manifesto/boycott thing is sort of over my head.

Also over my head is why you referred to opera, jazz, and classical music as "the fossil arts". Obviously you seem to think that the term is nasty and perjorative.

[A fossil art is one that has essentially stopped developing because it is stifled by older material. Yes, there are still modern operas being written, but they are lucky to get a performance instead of Verdi or Wagner. Orchestral music is still dominated by Bach, Mozart, et al, and jazz has long since become a backwater of musicologists and aging themes. Rock music is in much the same danger, as the newer bands rely more on image than music to distinguish themselves from the Sixties.]

I certainly go to concerts when I have the money, and I listen to only classical music on the radio. My CD collection is mostly classical, along with a few really weird items. Things like jazz, pop/rock, r&b, rap, etc., just have no interest to me. As such, I have to agree with Ted White (something I usually don't like to do) that jazz is not a fossil art.

Maybe my preference for classical music (and I include opera in that inclusive category) has something to do with my preference for playing chess instead of games of chance. Or maybe not. I suppose chess could be referred to as a fossil game since there have been no rule changes for almost 400-500 years. Well, maybe the introduction of chess clocks in the last century might be considered a rule change.

As far as saving apazines goes, Harry Warner Jr. and others might consider sending them to Forry Ackerman. All my apas and fanzines that I receive go to Forry. He is still working on having his collection housed in a permanent form. Yes, Forry did sell part of his collection, but that was the movies memorabilia stuff. His hardcore collection of SF books, magazines, and fanzines is still intact, and he has every intention of keeping it so. Which is why I donate all my fanzines to him. He will not throw anything out, and I do not have to worry about storage and space problems.

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

1992-3-24

In both #7 and #7.1, you mention Crad Kilodney. He appears to have faded from the local literary world's shadowy corners, and that may explain why he is more visible elsewhere. I've heard about The Years Without Art from artzines like NOVOID (produced by Colin Hinz of Orillia). While the idea is novel, the elitism of the art world is then picked up and carried by those demanding the art boycott in print. Zines participating in this have that overly proud, look-at-me-how-good-I-am attitude that makes them look foolish and hypocritical. Another idea shot to hell by those who would use it to glorify themselves. Perhaps an artist or art show operator should be given a chance to rebut Polvikoski's article.

[I have trouble with your argument. Every topic could be judged this way, which isn't fair to those who really believe in it and are not just posturing. Many issues such as abortion, death penalty, or compulsory bilingualism can be argued as being nothing more than look-at-me-how-good-I-am- to-support/oppose-it.]

[continued next page]

From Buck Coulson's letter ... I would hope that some clubs would have fan historians, but this kind of project is always limited by the appeal a history of a club would have. Fandom may now be too big for any kind of coherent history, but the histories I have read have fascinated me which is why I've been ranting in probably too many locales for more fan history in accessible form. Many fanhistorians in this country have lost credibility by losing objectivity, which also hurts the final goal of the exercise, a history of those who have fanned before us.

[This gives me an opportunity to leap in again with a request for more Canadian fanhistories on clubs, zines, and apas. OPUNTIA is not entirely ephemeral; copies are on deposit in the National Library of Canada. I doubt any grand history could ever be written, but a bunch of specialized histories can add up. To put it more elegantly, many a mickle makes a muckle. Objectivity is a harder thing to assess, but as long as the historian isn't conducting a jihad against someone, then it should be okay. All history is a set of fables mutually agreed upon.]

I expressed a hope that Al Lastovica would be able to have a business trip to Toronto in June. I was bang on with that; he's not only making his way here from Johannesburg, but he's also got two dealer tables at Ad Astra 12. I hope he'll be able to meet contemporaries he probably hasn't seen in decades.

FROM: Mark Manning  
1709 South Holgate  
Seattle, Washington 98144

1992-3-25

In my bleaker moments, when I thrill with secret glee to hear a city park squirrel choking on his peanut shells and the milk of human kindness has transmogrified itself to tartest yoghurt in my fist-like heart, I believe that the only realistic analysis of Art was offered by Valerie

Solanis. "Art is Fart", she wrote in her masterwork, the S.C.U.M. MANIFESTO, just before shooting Andy Warhol, missing his heart by inches, dammit. And it was in just such a mood, a couple of years ago, that I first read of the great Art Strike, from which we suffer, even today. You bet I was glad to read about the Art Strike, because otherwise I wouldn't have known it was happening at all. The galleries around here still appear to be full of bedframes made of broken Coke bottles, photocopied dollar bills Scotch-taped onto posterboard to form silhouettes of contemporary politicians, "installations" consisting of three boulders dumped randomly into a room, and the odd piece of similarly unlikely flotsam that has the uncanny power to make my heart stop beating for that eternal split-second, thereby making the hours of viewing cliché, laziness, and pretentiousness actually worth while. Reading over the various Art Strike manifesti, I'm struck by the pretentiousness of it all, and by the rehashing of labour and radical clichés as embarrassing in such a context as those gooeey sermons always are in STAR TREK episodes. As for laziness, well, what do you imagine the Art Strikers are doing with themselves these days? It is to shrug.

One of the high points of OPUNTIA #7 was Crad Kilodney, whose books and tapes don't sound interesting, come to think of it. His article sounded like he had fun, which is good. It added to the zest with which he wrote the piece. But it's not so easy to see just what the point of his hoax was.

I mean, I like poetry, right? Three of my favourite volumes of verse are written by Marilyn Hacker, Rosemary Daniell, and Eleanor Wilner. If I got a job tomorrow as a first reader for some publisher, and Crad Kilodney were to send me a hoax submission consisting of verse from these three books, the purported author being an admitted child molester at some high-security psycho-ward, I'd probably neither recognize the

poems, nor would I likely recommend purchase of the volume, even if I thought they were first-rate.

[Why not? If it is good work, it shouldn't matter who wrote it. I have one of those sheets of advice from ASI-MOV'S which says "We don't reject people, just paper". If this is true, which I doubt and which Kilodney has shown to be otherwise, then Asimov himself shouldn't be able to unload some of his short stories that he does. Editors don't want to come out and admit that many items are purchased for the name of the author and would have been rejected if sent in by J. Blow from Piapot, Sask.. This is the trouble with Art as well; too much emphasis on reputation.]

The hoops a poet has to jump through in order to get work printed and distributed by a commercial publishing house are disgusting in the extreme, but the alternatives are 1) to give up writing, 2) to stay a proud amateur, and 3) to self-publish your books and hawk them yourself.

FROM: Henry Welch  
5538 N. Shasta Drive  
Glendale, Wisconsin 53209

1992-3-24

I agree with many of Polvikoski's observations. It has always been my impression that most abstract art is not. Any child can do splatter painting, so why is some considered brilliant and others just the doodlings of a child? Of course, the idea of fashionability is very subjective, and there are always going to be the mindless drone type that will buy something because some so-called "expert for the moment" has deemed it to be fashionable. A classic example that comes to mind for me is the idea of a Pet Rock.

Many interesting comments on the relationship between a feudish nature and its relationship to national organiza-

tions. My conclusion in this matter would be that the presence of a strong centralized control in a national organization would tend to decrease feuds. This seems to stem from the overall guiding party line that the national organization tends to promote. This, however, does not eliminate the presence of feuds at the national level or the petty power squabbles at the local level. Even such august institutions as the Catholic Church are not immune; consider the Great Schism.

FROM: Alexander Vasilkovsky  
poste restante, General P.O.  
252001, Kiev-1, Ukraine

1992-3-30

I've received OPUNTIA 5, 6, and 6.5. I received your zines regularly during the recent months but was unable to reply quickly. You can see that this letter is printed on an old mechanical typewriter. Being a programmer by profession, I'm so much used to using a computer for my correspondence and for any fanzine writing, that to use a typewriter instead is a painful process.

In mid-January, a computer was taken out of my office so CHERNOBYLIZATION was postponed, but double issue 4/5 will come out in April, I hope. I can also write my complaints of nearly losing my job the same month. These economic/job problems have prevented me from every possible fanacs, and my correspondence is now an unmakeable heap of letters, fanzines, etc. Boris Sidyuk helps me to manage the situation, but we have to prepare our zine first of all. That's because we are about to attend Eurocon in Germany and (if we'll be lucky enough) Illumination/Eastercon in UK. The problem is drawing up the documents, booking tickets, and exchanging money. The latter is the most serious problem. Considering our salaries, no one can afford

[continued next page]

a foreign convention because it is too expensive by current exchange rates. Boris has found a sponsor, but the sponsor can provide us only the tickets and drawing of all the documents on his own expense, but not the equivalent of US\$200 he promised at the start of the thing. Well, our fanzine as well as some fannish souvenirs will be our money, as well as recently issued Ukrainian stamps. These Ukrainian stamps were made by overprinting USSR stamps. Such overprints usually are issued in small number of copies and on different USSR stamps.

[Thanks very much for the overprints on your letter. The philatelic community in North America is highly interested, and the stamp periodicals are filled with reports on the overprints. For those of you who haven't seen them, the stamps are old issues of USSR overprinted with the Ukrainian trident symbol and a new value.]

The Edmonton fanhistory by Garth Spencer is very interesting, especially from the viewpoint of comparing it with what we have here. It's a pity that there are no historians in local fandom who would write Kiev fanhistory. I'll discuss it with Boris; maybe he'll be able to write it or find the one who can.

[I would be delighted to print a Kiev fanhistory.]

1992-4-17

The most interesting feature of OPUNTIA 7 is Crad Kilo-dney. The hoax was cleverly thought out and masterfully performed. One should notice that in the case of Col. Mbongo only the smallest publisher has recognized the original text. Has anyone done anything of this kind with SF/fantasy works? It would be interesting to try L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future Contest by sending them something by Hubbard himself. Probably his long-out-of-print short story.

Name duplication in fandom: There's the same situation in

the ex-USSR fandom. (Though the empire has fallen apart, the fandom remains more or less unsplit, though national structures are already created, not to split it, mostly to represent fandom on the national level.) So, the most common name is Sergei Ivanov, four of them, all in different ex-USSR countries, and almost all write sf&f.

FROM: Brian Earl Brown  
11675 Beaconsfield  
Detroit, Michigan 48224

1992-2-25

I'm sure historians will be thankful for Garth's concise and evenly written history of Edmonton fandom. I did at one time try to revive a Detroit clubzine, SELDON'S PLAN, which would have been funded by Wayne State University as part of its student activities grant. I liked the idea of spending someone else's money but never felt comfortable with someone else's fanzine. For my first issue I did a retrospective of SP: I think it was its tenth anniversary. Basically the pattern that showed up strongly there was that activity depended entirely on who was editing the fanzine. Its first editor had grandiose plans about becoming an SF writer so SF appeared often and featured lots of fiction, mostly his. When he grew bored with the process, the fanzine went into decline until a second generation of club members came along. Eventually the Wayne Third Foundation ran out of university students and was kicked out. Whether there is a new SF club at Wayne State is a mystery to me even though we are talking about a university located within Detroit. Clubs depend entirely on the enthusiasm of their members, and no one's enthusiasm stays high for long.

[Which is why I have several hobbies. I can switch back and forth as my interests change, and come back refreshed and ready to go again.]

FROM: Dale Speirs  
Box 6830  
Calgary, Alberta  
CANADA, T2P 2E7

WHY YOU GOT THIS ZINE

- Noblesse oblige.
- You contributed (this ish).
- You contributed (next ish).
- We trade.
- We should trade. Interested?
- You sent money. Thanks.
- How about a letter of comment?
- This is the last issue you'll receive unless you Do Something.
- You were mentioned on page \_\_\_\_.

**TO:**