

# OPUNTIA 12.1



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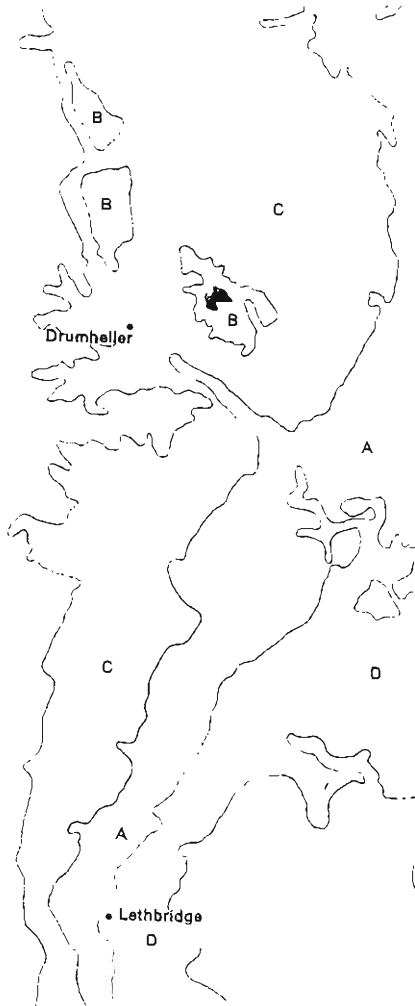
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OPUNTIA #12.1

April 1993

ZINE REVIEWS

ISSN 1183-2703

OPUNTIA is published irregularly by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. Available for \$1 cash, trade for your zine, or letter of comment.

ABOUT THE COVER: A geological map of southern Alberta, showing the general trend of exposed bedrock, as taken from ATLAS OF ALBERTA. The linear jumbles at left are the Rocky Mountains, a mixture of Devonian to Cretaceous formations, called for good reason The Disturbed Belt. At middle (marked 'B') are Palaeocene deposits, laid down just after the dinosaurian extinction, when Alberta was starting to go from tropical to temperate climate as the Rockies began to rise up, about 63 megayears ago. The 'C' area is late Cretaceous, and one of the richest sources of dinosaur fossils in the world. 'A' is marine late Cretaceous, and 'D' is another terrestrial late Cretaceous deposit.

CONADIAN PROGRESS REPORT #3 is now out. 2708 members are signed up, of whom 330 are Canucks, 2291 are Americans, and the rest from overseas. The usual sort of announcements that one expects, and a report by Paula Johanson on the train that has been booked from Vancouver to Winnipeg via Edmonton. (Alas, trains don't run through Calgary anymore.) Lots of ads from other Worldcons or bids. Until September 30, 1993, membership is US\$85/C\$95 attending or US\$25/C\$30 supporting. Write to ConAdian, Box 2430, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4A7.

THE USUAL is a term you'll see in the zine reviews of the next few pages. It means you can get that zine in trade for your zine, \$2 for a sample copy, or contribution such as a letter of comment, artwork, or article.

PERIPHERAL VISIONS #12 is at hand, a special issue on censorship, with articles from readers as solicited by the editor Rob Sommers in a previous ish. Some for, some against, some defiantly wavering with the party line. The loc column is rapidly becoming a substantial thing. The front cover is appropriate to the theme, being a censored extract from a piece of legislation. This zine is, I think, of Hugo quality. Available for The Usual from Rob Sommers, 926C Waverly Way NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30307-2551.

SPUDNUT #1 consists of locs to SPUD #1. Let's see, Ted White, Joseph Nicholas, Buck Coulson, Joseph Major and the doyen of letterhacking himself, Harry Warner, plus a bunch of others scientifically referred to as et al. The Usual from Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Avenue, #9B, Trenton, New Jersey 08618.

GLEN BURNIELAND #26 is the perzine of Chuck Jones, who writes an only slightly fictionalized account of his life with Ms. Maggie and their two kids. In this ish, she and the kids return from an extended visit to the Philippines, Chuck has plumbing trouble, or rather the house does (I can relate to that), and he is interviewed twice, once by a newspaper and once for a job. The Usual from Chuck Jones, 9195-H Hitching Post Lane, Laurel, Maryland 20723.

SLUEBERDEGULLION #6 is Nigel Richardson's perzine. The life of a freelance computer-manual writer. The Usual c/o 9 Windsor Green, East Garforth, Leeds LS25 2LG, England.

VISIONS OF PARADISE #48 is the diaryzine of a math teacher (plus a few reviews). It all adds up. Usual from Robert Sabella, 2 Natalie Drive, Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828.

FRAGMENT 47 is a new one to me, and is reminiscent of RASPBERRY DRINKZINE, every copy being different, with all sorts of rubber stamps. Some of it is printed on sheets of paper recycled from the photocopier, with an article on one side and a page from a computer manual on the other side. This ecological consciousness is neutralized by the articles elsewhere in the zine printed only on one side and the reverse left blank. The zine starts off on a familiar note to Canadians with "Canadian Dollar Hits Bottom; Refuses To Bounce", only this time the loonie hit zero cents U.S.. A number of photocopy collages through the zine. Sandy Alexander has a short story on sentient snowflakes who use snowblowers as matter transmitters. A readable story. Theodore Angle addresses a May snowstorm in a flea market, and a little girl who does things like making people's clothing disappear. Some poetry and an epigram. This zine comes in cardboard covers. Not card covers, but yer genuine pieces of cardboard, pulpish and brown. FRAGMENT can be had for The Usual from C.F. Kennedy, Box 40, 90 Shuter Street, Toronto, Ontario M5B 2K6.

STET #7 is out, ninety pages of mimeo'd reading in the doorstopper size we've come to expect. Lots on printing zines, particularly the hectograph, that gelatin tray and purple ink method. Some recipes on how to hecto, including one used by Malawi guerillas for propaganda and communications, the government not allowing them access to the post office or telephone system for obvious reasons. About sixty pages of locs, a trip report on Rome (watch out for the gypsies), con reports (including one on romance writers), and a diatribe against special treatment for pros at cons (*THE FIRST THING WE DO ...*). A good solid read as always. The Usual from Leah Zeldes Smith, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling, Illinois 60090-6415.

WARP #22 is put out by the Montreal SF&F Association. The issue at hand reviews various cons in central Canada. A number of the usual hotel horror stories. Con-Cept 92 had its consuite cancelled by the Ramada hotel after the con started because the hotel misunderstood what it was. To

be fair, Ramada refunded \$1000 by way of apology, but it is a reminder to cons to spell out every detail in the contract and get it signed by someone with authority. (Reminds me of a comedy skit by the Royal Canadian Air Farce where a man trying to get past Customs demands "I want to speak to someone with a little authority!". Replies the Customs officer, "You may go ahead and speak with me; I have as little authority as anyone.") Maplecon 13 in Ottawa apparently lost money, and Rhinocon 2 in London had to change hotels when the first one went bankrupt. Not that I ever had wanted to be on a concom, but the more I read about these troubles, the more I'm convinced I'll stick to zinepubbing. WARP also carries an installment of a ST:TNG serial. This club is oriented to Trekkies for the most part, so one finds all sorts of S.T. news. A good clubzine in general, and to be had for The Usual from MonSFFA, Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Québec, H2W 2P4.

RELUCTANT FAMULUS #25, dated November 1992, has rather an interesting method of leading the reader into the editorial. We start off reading what appears to be a piece of fanfiction, about the inventor of a transporter beam who makes a leap of faith and winds up in the editor's chambers. From there the editorial smoothly hands the baton to Bob Tucker, who found himself in a class-action lawsuit against airlines because he had flown in them to conventions. Walt Willis has a fable that begins "Hercule Poirot arranged his letters in a neat pile in front of him. Then he picked up the little jewelled paper-knife given to him by a grateful Butlers' Union and slit the first one open." From there he gets involved in "The Case of The Disappearing Fan" even to the point of pubbing a zine and loocing. There is a court trial where Willis stands in the dock over a matter of timetravelling zines. Good fun. FAMULUS is available for The Usual from Thomas Sadler, 422 W. Maple Avenue, Adrian, Michigan 49221-1627.

SPENT BRASS #14 to 16 and IT'S A WONDERFUL ISH (oneshot) are a variety of zines ranging from four to eight pages of 8½ x 11 pages, some of them that fuzzy stuff that reminds us that mimeo is not yet entirely in the grave. #14 has a rather fantastical poll about favourite zines, fanwriters, cons, etc., that has results ... well, 28 responses to the poll, which explains why Corflu was the favourite con and most of the shortlisted zines such as FOSFAX, STET, and MIMOSA lost to TRAPDOOR. (No offense intended to Lichtman) A tour of the site of the Seattle World's Fair, which is much, I would imagine, like visiting Expo 67 (what's left of it). You can't go home or to the fair again. Not like the Calgary Winter Olympic sites, mind you, which are still in regular use, albeit the skijump tower (equipped with large rooms at the top of the tower) is booked for wedding receptions rather than ski jumpers. "We Have Shared the Incommunicable Experience of War" turns out to be an account of Clarion West, not Bosnia. #15 tries to explain why faraway objects look small, which seems like an easy question to answer until you try to explain it to a small child. In #16, Ted White reviews (with a chain-saw) A WEALTH OF FABLE in a style guaranteed to ensure no one will bother to do books like this again. We await Mr. White's book to see how it should be done instead. A oneshot adaptation of that old Jimmy Stewart movie is the final item at hand, showing how a fan's life has differed from what might have been had he taken the mundane road. SPENT BRASS is available for The Usual from Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, 4228 Francis Avenue N. #103, Seattle, Washington 98103.

XENOFIL was buried a couple of years ago when the editor emigrated from Cowtown to Lotusland (from Calgary to Vancouver, if you're not up on Canuck nicknames). So when I went into Off The Wall bookstore to hand Dave Hall his copy of OPUNTIA 12, I was a bit startled to receive in return a copy of XENOFIL. Re-incarnated under the editorship of Sheldon Wiebe, it is now the publication of three con societies, who still operate separately but now share an office and will use XENOFIL as a joint progress

report. If you are paid up for CalCon (gaming), NonCon, or Con Version, you should be getting this as a benefit of membership. The cover says this is Volume 10, #0, which didn't seem right because there were ten of the old XENOFIL, but a look inside reveals this is a typo and it is actually Volume 1, #0. The new zine is web offset on newsprint and saddle-stitched in 8½ x 11. Besides Calgary con news, it discusses the WesterCon 44 disaster from a different angle and bravely proposes that fandom should become Organized. Naturally I agree, and just as naturally I expect a few locs will take issue with What Is To Be Done. Basically this zine is like poking a stick at a wasp nest. Available for \$6 for four issues, but as the editor solicits contributions, it may be available for The Usual. Payment to ConVersion or locs/trades to the editor at 223 - 12 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, T2R 0G9.

SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG #2 is what Garth Spencer does when he isn't writing fanhistories for me or embroiled in Vanfandom committee meetings. Mostly locs and editorial comments this time. A faanfiction piece that I had to read twice because I lost track of who was doing what to whom (and it was only half a page). And a parody of Holocaust revisionism, which uses their methods to prove that Idaho doesn't exist. Available for The Usual from Garth Spencer, Box 15335, Vancouver, B.C., V6B 5B1.

THYME #89/AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS #50/ARTYCHOKE #1/ANSIBLE #65 all arrived together, not too surprising since one staple was used for all of them. A bit of everything in THYME such as a memorial for Roger Weddall, Boris Sidyuk on Ukrainian SF, Terry Frost on an Australian bid for the 1999 Worldcon. ARTYCHOKE shows a portfolio of Kerri Valkova's work, including her comic strip "Space-Time Buccaneers", about a crew trapped on a timetravelling sailing ship. As the ship's engineer bitterly complains, " ... Don't you run it as strange that we always end up in thick of some battle or some

[continued next page]

great turning point in history? I mean we'd never down-load in Pearl Harbour in 1066, would we? Or Hastings in 1941! Is that too futzing much to ask?". Available for The Usual via Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia.

BCSFAZINE #236 and #237 carries on with lots of good reading as always. #236 has a brief history by Brian Earl Brown on hero pulps, Sidney Trim on the META project to take up where SETI left off, and R. Graeme Cameron with the first installment of his Vancouver fanhistory. (Wait a minute! Didn't we just go through this already?) He was inspired by Garth to produce an anecdotal version. At this rate, Vanfandom will become the best documented in the hobby's history, not that such is a bad thing. #237 has the final installment of an extended interview with Spider Robinson, Trim again (this time on SCRAMjets), and that great favourite pasttime of all Canadians, a constitutional debate, albeit Draft 4 of the West Coast Science Fiction Association's proposed constitution. Please note that BCSFA has changed addresses; their zine is still to be had for \$20/year or prearranged trades from Box 48478, Bentall Centre, Vancouver, B.C., V7X 1A2.

OUTHOUSE #7/THE OLAF ALTERNATIVE #3 are stapled back to back a la Ace Doubles, the former containing locs in reply to the previous OLAF ALTERNATIVE. (Don't ask why the numbering sequence doesn't match up.) OLAF ALTERNATIVE has always been immediately recognizable by its cheerful hand coloured covers, done with felt pens in bright primary colours. Inside, lots of equally cheerful Olaf cartoons, which may be atrociously drawn but brighten up the zine nonetheless. A Soames and Flotsam adventure in search of a black cat, and a report by John Berry on the time he played soccer for the English side (not the official team but a pick-up game at a Spanish hotel). He wasn't on the English side, actually; because he lived in Belfast they put him on the Rest of the World side where he acted as a fifth column and tried to sabotage his supposed teammates. OLAF ALTERNATIVE is basically a jolly amble through fan-

dom via as many pubs as possible, while the sercons are off touring the museums and listening to lectures at the Mechanics Institute. For The Usual from Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 1LA, England.

THE LEIGHTON LOOK #2/93 is a four-pager that comes via Rodney Leighton, RR #3, Pugwash, Nova Scotia, BOK 1L0, for The Usual. About half this ish discusses what is a fair trade in getting zines, vis-à-vis LoCs, trades, SASEs, or cash. The other major part of this ish has reviews on music and zines. If you only receive SF zines and would like to branch out into alternative press zines, this would be a place to start collecting addresses.

THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOG #30 is obviously a reviewzine as could be guessed from the title. An extensive list of what is available from SFers, with brief summaries of their contents. The Usual from Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, Michigan 48224.

CONTRACT is a newszine specializing in Canadian SF conventions. A lengthy list of Canuck cons (I didn't realize there were that many) and a section of news and gossip about con-running. The Usual from John Mansfield, 321 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B9.

DISHWASHER #9 is a zine devoted to one topic, and it turns out to be one of the most fascinating zines I've ever read. You wouldn't think there is much to write about dishwashing, but Pete Jordan carries it off in style. He is a drifter who travels about the USA, and whenever he needs money he finds a dishwashing job in some restaurant. Besides his accounts, others chip in stories about places they have dishwashed. Pete has a number of movie reviews in which he only discusses the scenes with dishwashers in them. All the reviews end "A good movie but woulda been better if there were more dishwashing scenes." The Usual from 1085 I St. #3, Arcata, California 95521.

P.S.: FOUND IN THE TRASH #3 is a four-page zine on stuff that C.F. Kennedy and friends find in the garbage or out in a back alley. Things like weird postcards, obsolete phototypesetting machines, rubber stamps, and a pigeon. All I find in my back alley is dog droppings and shopping bags. You can get this zine as per the review of FRAGMENT #47.

SNARKIN' SURFARI #1 was produced by Barnaby Rapoport for Boskone 30. Topics include SF writers as musicians (Isaac Asimov = Benny Goodman, Gardner Dozois = Joni Mitchell, Spider Robinson = John Denver) and an article that claims the first cyberpunk story appeared in 1934. The Usual from Box 565, Storrs, Connecticut 06268.

LAST RESORT #2 is half reviews, half locs, and half commentary on why people publish. (Yes, I know the math does not add up, but then again I work for the government.) A discussion on publishing confirms my belief that ink is the most addictive substance on Earth. The Usual from Steve George, 642 Ingersoll Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 2J4.

ATAVACHRON 7(4) is a Trekzine out of Victoria, British Columbia. It wanders off into other mediafan topics and book reviews. Trekfiction and a bunch of reprinted material. By and large, though, fairly tight to Trek business. The Usual from Box 6501, Victoria, B.C., V8P 5M4.

UNDER THE OZONE HOLE #3 has a few of the same articles as ATAVACHRON, not too surprising since it is also a Victoria zine. But the overlap is not major, and the rest of it is Canfannews and reviews, as well as locs, mostly on the correct use of the letter 'e'. The Usual from Karl Johanson, 4129 Carey Road, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 4G5.

DEROGATORY REFERENCE #74 is the zine of Arthur Hlavaty. A bit about settling down in Yonkers and the weird road system there. A discussion of Graphic User Interfaces in relation to cyberpunk and THE HACKER CRACKDOWN, Bruce

Sterling's new book. The Usual from 206 Valentine St., Yonkers, NY 10704-1814.

KNARLEY KNEWS #38 is mostly locs, but editor Henry Welch starts off with a diatribe against smokers. A report on bristlecone pines follows, included, I presume, because these are knarled trees. The Usual from 5538 N. Shasta Drive, Glendale, Wisconsin 53209-4925.

ETHEL THE AARDVARK #47 is an Australian clubzine. This issue has a tribute to the late Roger Weddall, whose death at age 36 made quite an impact. An interview with George Turner, who has the same problem with cultural imperialism that Canadian authors do, only he has to tone down his Strineishness. Various reviews and locs, with the general club business. The Usual from Melbourne SF Club, Box 212, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia.

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE #43 starts off with Lyn McConchie on sheep farming in New Zealand, which should eliminate any fantasies of city slickers to give up the urban rat race and retire to the simple life of rural areas. Lots of book reviews and locs. The Usual from Jean Weber, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde, NSW 2112, Australia

NEOPHYTE #14 is a fictionzine with a sense of purpose. It is not just a random jumble of articles and locs, but is aimed at helping new writers improve. Loccers are expected to provide constructive criticism of the stories. The stories are not necessarily faanfiction that readers quickly skip over. There are some good ones that would fit quite well into a prozine such as ANALOG or ASIMOV'S. A very focussed zine. The Usual from Jeff Behrnes, 11220 Hooper Road, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70818.

TRAPDOOR #12 is mostly a perzine albeit the pers doing the zineing are not necessarily the editor. Robert Lichtman writes about con-going and the zines he added to his collection. A tribute to Asimov, and Greg Benford provides an account of his job interview with Edward Teller of atom bomb fame. How many of us could match one question Benford was asked; "Will you be willing to work on weapons?". Elsewhere, articles on buying Hopli rugs, a trip to an abandoned coal mine, a "why publish?" account from a small-press operator, and how to escape a locked room in a psycho ward. The Usual from Robert Lichtman, Box 30, Glen Ellen, California 95442.

FROZEN FROG #6 starts off with a brief account of the recent unpleasantness with Eric Lindros and the Québec Nordiques hockey team, then a couple of reviews, and finally a plunge into locs, which make up most of the zine. The Usual from Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, Cap-Rouge, Québec, G1Y 1Y9.

ANVIL #55 comes in the Ace Double format, with the two editors each doing a half. A genzine with a bit of everything. Roy Rivens suggests the idea of fandom trading cards: " ... I'll trade you a 1948 Walt Willis rookie card for a 1970 Bob Tucker and a 1953 Forrest J. Ackerman. No, I don't want any 1992 Charles N. Brown's; there are thousands of them out there.". An extended tribute to Roger Weddall, with colour photos. And various other sundries. The Usual from 8325 - 7 Avenue South, Birmingham, Alabama 35206.

FOSFAX #164 is an evening's reading, not a quick skim as with many zines. This ish has 68 pages of microprint, a collection of book reviews, editorials, con reports, and, of course, the famous letters column. When FOSFAX was a monthly zine a few years ago, the combination of lots of reading and the immediacy of a quick response made it unbeatable. Alas, it has had to scale back to quarterly frequency, which reduces the impact of the locs, since most readers will have forgotten what it was that loccers

are so indignant about. Fortunately the Clinton presidency has diverted loccers away from the tired ruts they were in and into a fresh set of ruts. If you are a political animal, this is your zine. But FOSFAX does bring in science fiction here and there. There are con reports, and SF & fantasy books are discussed.

Book reviews. If you've never heard the name Joseph T Major, you haven't been reading FOSFAX. Although it only seems that he is the only reviewer in this zine, his reviews overwhelm the others. They are extended summaries and discussions, going on for pages of microprint. I daresay I've learned more history from his reviews than I did in school. Major is one of those increasingly rare reviewers who does not use the book as a launching pad for his philosophical musings and gives the actual book only passing mention. I quit buying one newstand SF digest in part because the reviewer kept forgetting that readers were not interested in his worldview. Major's reviews are to the point and well worth reading.

Darrell Schweitzer has an article on small-press zine pubbing. They seem to do best where the mass-market prozines do not go, such as horror, fantasy, and those countries with a small population (such as Canada or Australia) unable to support their own prozines.

Altogether, FOSFAX is a substantial mass of reading material, sort of an SF version of THE ECONOMIST.

Sample copy US\$3 or The Usual, from Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281.

BAD NEWZ is US\$3 for a sample copy from Bob Z., Box 14318, San Francisco, California 94114.

It is often assumed in SF stories that the future will inevitably trend towards One World Government, but if so, present situations indicate this will be a long time coming. ALPHABET CITY #2 takes a look at nationalism and its effects around the world. This broadsheet zine (27 cm by 37 cm in size, which makes it awkward to read) has some problems with layout, but fortunately the greater part of the text is readable. (Not as bad as MONDO 2000, where more often than not the reader must hunt around the page to find out which direction the text disappeared to.) A.C. #2 covers almost every nation having problems with 'ein reich, ein volk'. There is a discussion on the problems that USA will be facing with Hispanics, and a concept called Nuevo Aztlan. Canada is discussed in several articles. Scotland, the nearest analogy to Canada, save perhaps Ukraine, is blamed for its own inability to stand up to the English. German xenophobia, South African tribalism, the 'cleansing' of Bosnia, and the Japanese manga (graphic novels) which rewrite history are all discussed, being different aspects of nationalism. Eric Hobsbawm blames historians, philologists, and ethnographers for stirring up nationalism, saying "Historians here to nationalism what poppy growers in Pakistan are to heroin addicts: we supply the essential raw material for the market."

ALPHABET CITY is \$10/\$15/\$20 for Canada/USA/overseas respectively from Box 387, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2S9.

BAD NEWZ #17 is a collagezine that spends most of its pages on zine reviews, interviews with indie bands, ranting at The Establishment, and poems. An interesting item about the Union of Time Thieves, members of which steal time from their employers by goofing off. More stuff about FACTSHEET FIVE, which unfortunately doesn't appear to be getting the clean death it deserves but is being nibbled to death by frequent changes of ownership. Just take the thing out behind the barn, put a clean bullet through its head and get it over with.

THE GRAND DELUSION is the latest cassette from the Tape-Beatles, a group that specializes in audio collages. The background theme for this tape is the orchestral piece "Also Sprach Zarathustra" cut apart and re-arranged. Sampled speeches throughout echo all the clichés that were expounded by American politicians during the nastiness with Saddam.

The Tape-Beatles, I find, are one of the better underground groups using sampling. Many who indulge in the practice of reusing other people's music or words are not very imaginative, and in many cases use so much of other stuff as to be outright thieves. Soul singer James Brown once remarked of a rap group that used his songs that they were only as good as his last album. Ideally, sampling should use older material such as instructional records or songs not commonly played on the radio anymore. With a theme to tie everything together, sampling can be justified a bit more than if just a collage of recent Top 40 hits. The Tape-Beatles come close to the true spirit of sampling, that of recycling the past to make a new future. Items are remixed to show a different view from that intended by the original producers.

THE GRAND DELUSION can be had for US\$6 from the Tape-Beatles, Box 8907, Iowa City, Iowa 52244. Enclose an SASE if you would like a listing of their other tapes.

ON SPEC is the Canadian magazine of speculative writing. #12 is the Spring 1993 issue and has its theme as "Over the Edge", stories supposedly controversial. The editorial asks if these stories are too safe, no doubt expecting a pat on the back for daring to be on the cutting edge or past it. While the stories are often not what you'd give to your mother to read, it must be noted that they are not breaking new ground.



They have long ago been surpassed by the alternative press; Crad Kilodney for one was doing this sort of thing years ago, as were countless zines indexed in FACTSHEET FIVE. Indeed, SF as a whole, not just ON SPEC, long ago fell behind in the literature of ideas; even the much ballyhood New Wave was old hat to the avant garde. It is not just a matter of all those fantasy trilogies or jack-boot military SF churned out because the stuff sells. New genera such as cyberpunk quickly settled into punk rebel versus megacorporation formula.

This is not to say that the stories are poor reading. A story does not have to be a trendsetter to be enjoyable. Most mainstream writing seldom breaks new ground, but it is still a pleasure to read it because of good plotting, characterization, and a theme that holds the reader's interest. This is where most SF is, and where the Spring 1993 issue of ON SPEC. The lead story "Kissing Hitler", for example, is an account of how history databanks of future computers became garbled and educated people into believing that the Nuremberg rallies and the Woodstock rock concert were one and the same event. Joe Cocker and Hitler on the same stage. And the story "Godeaters" is an excellent turnabout-is-fairplay situation, where the multinational corporation that takes over a primitive African tribe so as to mine out the countryside is subtly taken over by the tribe without realizing it. None of this is cutting edge material (John Campbell would have accepted both the above stories for ANALOG in the 1960s), but the stories are good reading, and well worth the cost of a subscription.

ON SPEC is a perfectbound digest with colour cover and professional production values. A sample copy is \$6 from Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 5G6. Recommended.

In recent years, new attempts have been made to capture neophyte SF readers at the newsagents. Not the digests, which have remained stagnant or are declining in circulation, but 8½ x 11 full-colour magazines aimed at a non-

traditional readership. SCIENCE FICTION AGE is one of the latest entrants, sold on the magazine racks in the supermarkets or convenience stores. With any luck it might bring in new readers who would pass by ANALOG or ASIMOV'S. Issue #3 doesn't have as much fiction as a digest, but contains a wider variety of material that might keep a Trekkie or gamer coming back for more. It has ads for overpriced Star Trek collectibles, video companies, and New Age (rhymes with sewage). Harlan Ellison has a rather boring article on his dreams, and quite frankly he's getting on a bit to continue portraying himself as an Angry Young Man. This is the first time I couldn't finish reading him. Some adventure stories and an account of Snow White as told from the point of view of the magic mirror. Reviews cover comics, games, and a UFO movie. What is especially nice is a retrospect of early SF art from magazines. This sort of thing will reach the mediafen and neos who will never read STET or MIMOSA and who would not otherwise have any inkling of the past of SF. I think this is the magazine we need to keep literary fandom alive. A sample copy is \$3.95 from Science Fiction Age Circulation, Box 749, Herndon, Virginia 22070.

COPYRIGHT VIOLATION SQUAD BULLETIN is a new zine, the February 1993 issue being datelined as the "First Dispatch". It deals with sampling artists who sampled a bit too much, and as a result ran afoul of lawyers. In this issue, most of the text deals with an album "U2" by the band Negativland, which resulted in them being squashed by heavy legal artillery representing the rock band U2. John Oswald got into trouble for using an altered photo of Michael Jackson. And the zine BETTER HOMOS & GARDENS had to change their title after being sued by the publishers of BETTER HOMES & GARDENS who didn't agree that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

As was correctly remarked by the editor of CVSB: "... neither of these audio works might have been in troub-

le had it not been for the fact that they both sported provocative graphic art on their covers. The PLUNDER-PHONIC CD showed a collage image by Oswald showing Michael Jackson's head and clothing on the body of a nude woman. The Negativland recording's cover art taunted U2's management by having "the letter U and the numeral 2" featured more prominently than anything else on the record's cover. What CVS is not saying is that these artists "were asking for it", so to speak. We would merely like to point out that the legality (or illegality) of sonic sampling has not been clearly established. On the other hand, the protocols for the use of copyright or otherwise protected words and graphics (which includes trademarks) is fairly well established by the legal system, and therefore the prospects for success in such a litigation are more likely. It seems to us that both Negativland and Oswald might have gotten by with their nominal music 'theft', but clearly the unauthorized use of proprietary graphic motifs left them wide open to litigation."

Indeed. And in the same category are zines which have provocative covers or titles which might attract the interest of Customs officers. A bit of common sense might suggest putting border-crossing zines in plain brown envelopes with just the street or box number for a return address. The zine pubber may be willing to fight for freedom and the First Amendment, but it is unfair to get the recipient embroiled in an unwanted hassle.

CVS BULLETIN is part of a package of zines published by the Drawing Legion, Box 227, Iowa City, Iowa 52244, and to be had for US\$10 in the USA, US\$12 to Canada and Mexico, and \$18 overseas. Payment as above will get all of the Drawing Legion zines in addition, such as RETROFUTURISM, YAWN, and PHOTOSTATIC.

WIRED #1 and MONDO 2000 #8 are much of a muchness, so I'll review them together. Both deal with the electronic future, all the neat gadgets, virtual reality, computer networks, and databases. They discuss these items from a general point of view rather than specific product tests. Both try to inform the viewer of what is coming and to provide background information not covered in mass-media magazines. Both are full-colour glossies with spectacular but sometimes hard-to-read layouts. Call me an old-fashioned BOF, but I still think linear is better than nonlinear thinking. Hypertext and nonlinear philosophies make it harder to read and assimilate material. Multimedia is a trendy thing, but reduces comprehension even as it entertains and delights. In reading these zines, one is slowed down by having to hunt around for the text; by the time it is found, one has forgotten what the previous sentence was. I am surprised that WIRED, in particular, jumps so many articles to the back of the zine instead of keeping them in one piece. Newspaper editors have had to deal with complaints from readers on this for decades, so a future-oriented zine should not be regressing in this regard.

MONDO 2000 has a wider mixture, reaching out to rock stars, for example, but WIRED had more solid content. Both deal with the downside of The Net, the former on Information America Network (\$95/hr connect time will provide you with all information about an individual, such as address changes, bank accounts, and driving records), the latter on the U.S. Dept. of Justice who stole computer programs. MONDO 2000 goes more interviews, such as U2 versus Negativland.

If you want a new buzzword to use at cons, try 'otaku' for computerds. Otaku (Japanese of course) originally meant a formal way of dealing with people, to the point that one calls a best friend 'sir'. It is used now for hackers who have no social skills, who live

only to play computer games and, more importantly, obtain information for the sake of obtaining information, no matter how useless it may be. To quote: "Their obsession with gathering may, at first glance, seem no different than the fanaticism of collectors of rare books ... But it is as if instead of trading actual items, book collectors were to trade only information about a particular novel. ("Did you know that Hemingway's original manuscript of FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS was returned because of insufficient postage?")"

Examples given were manga otaku (comics), monster otaku, (Godzilla et al), military otaku, imperial otaku ("Debate the lengths of the Meiji and Showa reigns down to the second."), and, which really woke me up, tropical fish otaku ("... memorizing the Latin names of 150 fish species without ever owning a goldfish"). More details in WIRED.

WIRED isn't one hosannah for The Net. Stewart Brand has an article providing a counterbalance to those who gush about how new artforms can be created on computers. True enough, but Brand reminds us that such artforms will soon be forgotten because the equipment needed to run them is obsolete, whereas canvas and books have a better chance at posterity. Bruce Sterling writes about how the Yanks won the Arabian Gulf war with virtual reality, which is used to teach tank crews how to co-ordinate an attack, whereas the traditional single-unit simulator only shows them how to load a cannon. John Markoff discusses cellular telephones. Unbeknownst to most users, these phones have a software sub-basement, where hidden programs will allow you to monitor any phone calls, trace the location of a given telephone, and make free phone calls by use of vampire phones which pick up radio emissions from other cellualars and steal their IDs. To find out about these hidden programs, the hackers simply bought a repair manual for the phone.

WIRED is \$5.95 at the newsagents or US\$19.95 a year (Visa and Mastercard accepted) from Box 191826, San Francisco,

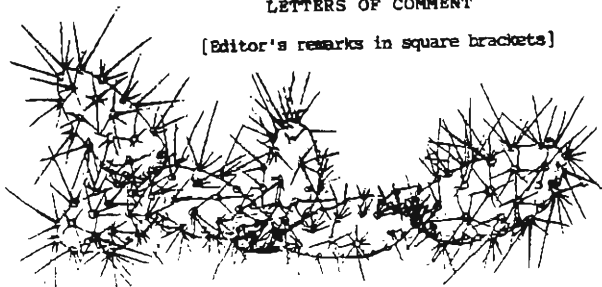
California 94119-1826. MONDO 2000 is \$6.95 on stands or US\$24 for five issues from Box 10171, Berkeley, California 94709-0171.

YAWN #38 is devoted to a history of the recently concluded Art Strike, mostly being Stewart Home's speech to the Victoria & Albert Museum on this topic. Still a subject that can get some people purple-faced with anger. This zine is put out by the Drawing Legion and is available as mentioned in the CVS BULLETIN review.

ON THE STREET WITH CRAD KILODNEY #5 is the latest audio cassette from Kilodney. He writes and publishes his own books, then goes out onto the sidewalks of downtown Toronto and peddles them to passersby. While doing so, he carries a concealed microphone and tapes the more interesting conversations he gets into. Or, as has happened, fights he gets into. This volume has two extended pieces and a number of shorter items. The lengthy conversation which Kilodney entitles "Conspiracies Unlimited" records a chat with a fellow who has developed a Grand Unified Conspiracy Theory that ties in every conspiracy you ever heard of. There is also a long telephone conversation with a lady who finds Kilodney's books disgusting and just so much dung. She showed a copy to her brother the psychiatrist, asking him to diagnose Kilodney on the basis of his writings, and was not pleased when he declared Kilodney normal. So she phoned Kilodney to find out why he writes dung. This cassette is \$10 (US\$ accepted at par) from Crad Kilodney, Box 54541, North York, Ontario, M5M 4N5. He also has various books and probably the previous volumes of ON THE STREET available; send him an SASE for a listing.

## LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



Scottish/Finnish zine, many of Britain's national newspapers would be Canadian, and the American and Australian papers would be a hash of different ethnics.]

The map that accompanies the FTT review ... the bit of Holmdale Terrace between Frinton Road and the railway line has long since disappeared, subsumed into the gardens of the houses on the eastern side of Frinton Road.

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

1993-2-3

For some time now, I've been pondering whether anyone would be interested in knowing how many fantasy and SF authors were also seriously interested in parapsychology. I have membership lists of the (British) Society for Psychical Research and I know that some contributed to American SF magazines.

[Readers can reply direct to Chester on this subject.]

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

1993-2-3

Speaking of indexing authors, the pulp magazines cause problems because of all the pseudonyms used. The February 12 issue of COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE lists the actual authors of all the Doc Savage stories attributed to Kenneth Robeson and says it's the only fully correct list. Lester Dent wrote most of them, but some were by Harold A. Davis, W. Ryerson Johnson, Laurence Donovan, William G. Bogart, and Alan Hathway. In a recent AMAZING, Robert Silverberg wrote about pseudonyms. He

[continued next page]

FROM: Joseph Nicholas  
5A Frinton Road, Stamford Hill  
London N15 6NH, England

1993-2-4

Thank you for OPUNTIA #11 and #11.1. We trust that you have received the letters we sent you in mid-January, although neither are mentioned anywhere.

[Generally speaking, I put locs in the next appropriate fractional issue. For example, a loc on #12 will appear in #13, on #12.1 in #13.1, etc. (or a waf notice as the case may be). By now you'll have seen your letters in #11.5.]

We must protest at your description of FTT as an English zine. For one thing, I'm part Scots and Judith is wholly Australian! Nor, really, is it a perzine, since we usually manage to have at least one outside contribution in each issue.

[Since FTT is published in England, it is an English zine. After all, magazines are not classified by their editor's nationality. Were this the case, OPUNTIA would be a



puzzle them out, aren't similar to what I would expect smaller towns in your area to be named. So I'm left with two hypotheses: there is a city in Russia for which your town was named or vice versa, or this is a Russian map of your area in which the names of some towns have been translated into Russian words rather than transliterated on the basis of how they sound.

[There are only two Calgarys in the world, the Canadian one being named after the Scottish one. The map is from a Russian atlas. As far as I can tell, the names have been phonetically translated. I used a Russian alphabet to retranslate the names back into English, and they all pronounce the names correctly, rather than translate the name 'Red Deer', for example, into whatever the Russian word is for elk. I'm trying to find Arabic, Chinese, etc. maps for southern Alberta, so be forewarned.]

Just think how much more puzzled you would be if that copy of NEBULA AWARD STORIES had come from Stuttgart in Germany rather than in Arkansas. Some years ago I did a piece in one of my apazines speculating on the lives and travels of some used books I'd acquired. The most intriguing, I think, are a couple of luxuriously bound Jules Verne novels in the original French, whose inscriptions indicate that they were originally presented to a young woman who was enrolled in a school in north Africa.

Leo Slezak is the most probable author of that question about when the next swan left. He seemed to be doomed to difficulties with animals in his opera performances. Once in GOTTERDAMMERUNG he found the door to the stable where he was supposed to lead Grane had been left locked, tried the other doors on the set, and finally put the horse in the only one that was unlocked, leading to Guttrune's bedroom. The Met's current production of LOHENGGRIN solves the problem by leaving out the swan and the boat altogether.

[I'm trying to think how that could be done without the

swan. Does he amble onstage instead? And what happens to the poor fellow who had been turned into the swan?]

Fortunately Dick Lynch did the index for the new edition of A WEALTH OF FABLE, preserving my reputation of never doing the dirty work on my large fanzine histories. Someone at Advent compiled the index for ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. Nancy Atherton indexed the original mimeographed edition of A WEALTH OF FABLE some years after its publication, but I don't know how widely her labour of love was distributed. Since computers are supposed to have supernatural powers, I'm surprised I haven't heard of a computer capable of creating an index while the stuff is being typed into it, with the typist pressing a particular key before or after every name or word to be included in the index.

About faux amis: the most common one in general use, I think, is the custom of referring to the French movie GRAND ILLUSION with the same two words instead of translating the title, just because both French words are also English words. The trouble is 'grand' in English has taken on the connotations of something wonderful or splendid. It doesn't have that meaning in French, so the meaning of the title would be better rendered as BIG ILLUSION, which fits the nature of the film much better.

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

1993-2-6

I just got FACTSHEET FIVE #46, published by Seth Friedman (Box 170099, San Francisco 94117-0099) which has a brief mention of my 1991 IT GOES ON THE SHELF #8. They sent a notice but I had to pay for it. A hundred pages of small print on pulp paper with saddlebound slick covers, well organized and indexed. Cover price is \$3.95 or six for \$20. I haven't decided whether to subscribe. The reviews don't have Gunderloy's touch.

FROM: Steve George  
642 Ingersoll Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 2J4

1993-2-3

Unlike Brian Earl Brown, I don't find the stagnation of SF at all evident. This could be due to my ten year holiday from reading the stuff, but I've got to say that upon returning, and only recently, to reading SF, I was astounded by how good it was. Perhaps I've simply been lucky in my choices. Granted, there's a lot on the shelves I wouldn't even look at compared to ten years ago, but the books that do attract me seem to be as good as they ever were.

FROM: Robert Runté  
#208, 175 Algonquin Road West  
Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 5L6

1993-2-11

I must take exception to your review ... suggesting that "In the beginning was MAPLE LEAF RAG, which begat MLR and thence XENOFILIA ...". MAPLE LEAF RAG took up the torch from NCF, which started out as a newszine and only turned into a genzine when it became clear that Mike Hall and I were not going to be able to bring it out frequently enough. NCF itself grew out of my Canadian news column in NEOLOGY. NORTHERN LIGHTS by Linda Ross-Mansfield preceded MAPLE LEAF RAG by several years, though the lineage is not direct.

The fact that so many different people across Canada have all seen and responded to the need for a Canadian newszine says something important about the cohesiveness of Canadian fandom over the last fifteen years. This contrasts with the recent American experience where there really has been no general content fannish newsletter since the demise of Linda Bushyaeger's excellent KARASS. FILE 770 filled that niche for several years, but now seems devoted almost entirely to Worldcon news. One reason for the lack of an American newsletter is that publications like

LOCUS and SF CHRONICLE (which both started as fan newsletters) provide excellent coverage of the pro news, whereas in Canada important news like the publication of ARK OF ICE can only be found in fanzines. Similarly, American fan news travels widely and quickly over the various computer BBSs which carry SF and fan newsmags whereas there is no separate Canadian SF echo, Mike Hall's continuing efforts notwithstanding.

On reading the title of Weinstein's latest effort, THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOSCAMOLOGY, I was reminded of a longterm project of mine to start an apazine with a pretentious academic title. An apa with a title such as CANADIAN JOURNAL OF SELF-REFERENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY would attract the growing number of fans who work in academia, since they could then enter their bimonthly apazines on their Curriculum Vitae. For those working in the publish-or-perish world of academia, the need to produce a steady stream of new scholarly publications usually means that the longtime fan has to choose between continued involvement in fandom or a successful academic career. The fatal flaw in a system which bases promotion primarily on the number of titles in one's CV is that no one on the tenure committee ever has time to actually read any of these articles. This explains why so much of what is published in academic journals is such crap; quantity rather than quality is what seems to matter most. Since getting published in a peer review journal is largely dependent on one's membership in an old boy's network, there is a constant proliferation of journals as those shut out of one publication (for having the wrong theoretical framework, political orientation, or associates) simply found a new one. Consequently, there is too much being published in one's own field, let alone that of one's colleagues, for those on the tenure committee to keep track of all the journals which show up on CVs.

Quarterly publication in, say, MERRIL COLLECTION'S ANNOTATED REVIEW or the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF

INTERDISCIPLINARY BREAKTHROUGHS would allow continued involvement in fandom while simultaneously advancing one's academic career. In the unlikely event of a promotions committee challenging any of these entries by actually demanding to see a copy of the journal in question, the worst that could happen is that the entries would subsequently be disallowed. There is, after all, no question of fraud here, since the listed publications do exist. I suppose though, my entitling an apazine discussion of the latest gossip from a recent convention as "Socio-Sexual Relations in Avocational Subcultures" might well be construed as a shade misleading. On the other hand, having read some of the rubbish put out by certain of my colleagues, I'm not convinced that their work is anywhere as profound as much of what I read in fanzines.

The recently defunct AUSTRALIAN METAPHYSICAL REVIEW led the way here, but many existing zines and apas could easily adapt. FUCK THE TORIES could become BRITISH JOURNAL OF REPRODUCTION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY, while WOMEN'S APA could be as accurately entitled NORTH AMERICAN FORUM OF GENDER ISSUES. OPUNTIA itself is a fine title for those in agriculture or biology but unfortunately a bit too narrow for social sciences or education.

[Not necessarily; with a good subtitle it could fit anything. Say OPUNTIA: THE JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC EPISTEMOLOGY or OPUNTIA: REVIEW OF SPECULATIVE FICTION.]

FROM: Garth Spencer 1993-2-6  
Box 15335  
Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 5B1

In reviewing BCSFAZINE #235 you write " ... the gripping part of this ish is the discovery that the club was unincorporated ... ". It was not the club BCSFA but the convention co-ordination committee WCSFCCA that got delisted from the Registrar of Companies. The point is this: either the committee running a convention had better be incorp-

orated as a non-profit corporation, or the convention should be sponsored by one. The mechanism, in the case of V-Cons, was that WCSFCCA held the V-Con name as a trademark, and granted use of the name to committees that came and bid for the privilege.

FROM: Alexander Vasilkovsky 1993-2-22  
poste restante, General P.O.  
252001, Kiev-1, Ukraine

I was somewhat amused to see the review of Yevtushenko's ARDABIOLA. I have never heard that the novel was translated into English. I read it in the late 1970s in the shorter magazine version, and found it SF written by a mainstream writer (in this case, poet) from the mainstream point of view. Yet it is well-written and a pleasure to read. It's a pity that since then he hasn't developed this side of his talent and did everything but SF, and during the last years of the USSR even became very active political figure.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Harry Andruschak, Rodney Leighton, Joe Maraglino, Chuck Jones, Pekka Allan Manninen, Alan Stewart, Bill Bowers, Randy Tin-Ear, Nigel Richardson, Ben Schilling