

OPUNTIA

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OPUNTIA #14.1

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

ART CREDIT: The cover depicts Opuntia ovata, from THE CACTACEAE: DESCRIPTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF PLANTS OF THE CACTUS FAMILY, by N.L. Britton and J.N. Rose, artist unknown.

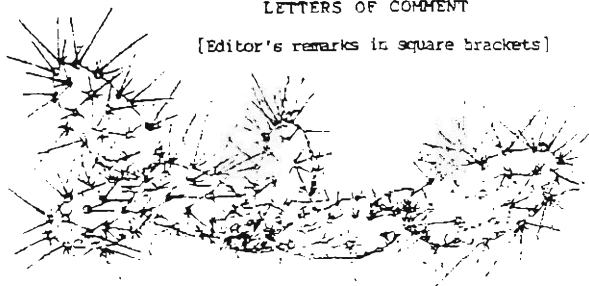
THE USUAL: Further on in this issue, you'll come across some zine reviews. If you are relatively new to the world of science-fiction zines, the term 'The Usual' may need to be explained. This means that the zine can be had for \$2 for a sample copy, trade for your zine (but send a sample first so they can decide if they're interested), a letter of comment (loc), or a contribution such as art or an article (but you should really see a copy first so you don't send an inappropriate contribution). If you are from an independent republic where hard currency is not to be had, write a loc; most editors will send at least one sample copy and you can keep getting the zine as long as you write in passable English.

EDITORIAL: For some reason, some people new to zine publishing are apologetic because they don't have a computer to do it with or perhaps not the right printer or software. I've seen this in two new zines from opposite sides of the continent. Not to worry, guys; there are still a number of zines done by typewriter, OPUNTIA being one of them. It is content that counts, not how many fonts you can use on one page. The text should be easily read, the art properly reproduced. That's all.

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LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



FROM: Buck Coulson

2677W-500N

Hartford City, Indiana 47348

1993-5-19

I disagree with your comment that "the digests .. have remained stagnant or are declining in circulation". Ten years ago they were declining in circulation; recently the circulation of all the digests has remained remarkably steady, with a few gains one year, a few losses the next. They may be stagnant; that depends on personal opinion. Circulation doesn't. Right now, the lowest circulation magazines are AMAZING and, omitting new titles which haven't yet published circulation figures, ABORIGINAL. WEIRD TALES seems to be increasing very slowly. But all of these are large-size.

[The February 1993 issue of LOCUS shows that since 1982 ANALOG is down more than 20,000 paid copies, ASIMOV is down 13,000, and F&SF is about the same. Since the population grew in this period, % changes would be even worse.]

Robert Runté's comments on the use of JOURNAL in titles reminded me of THE JOURNAL OF OCULENTERATOLOGY, a humorous fanzine published for a few issues by Bob Leman.

FROM: Lloyd Dunn
Box 227
Iowa City, Iowa 52244

1993-6-8

I'm curious about what Canada Post would do to anyone receiving a piece from a "Copyright Violation Squad". You point out that I should not openly mail such a thing to a Canadian address. This is fine; I won't in the future if it could cause problems for the recipient.

[Canada Post itself does not examine mail, rather Canada Customs has inspectors in the mail processing plants who have the right to intercept and open mail as they choose. "Copyright Violation Squad" would probably pass muster as the name suggests a business organization against copying without permission/royalties. But just the initials should suffice on the return address if there is doubt. Something blatant like MAN/BOY PICTORIAL or S&M QUARTERLY is just asking for trouble. And a word of advice for those sending a book or periodical: Do not use the green Customs stickers, no matter what your local postal clerk tells you. This only flags the item to the Customs inspector's attention that might otherwise pass through. A couple of years ago, pressure from Canadian business resulted in a new law that all items worth \$20 or more entering Canada through the mails must have G.S.T. assessed PLUS a \$5 inspection fee PLUS the item may be held if no invoice is enclosed. Also, do not label anything 'Educational Materials', as so many pornographers try to sneak in stuff this way that Customs automatically opens all such material. In short, use plain envelopes with just a return address if the zine title is at all likely to provoke the interest of a Customs officer.]

FROM: Paula Johanson
Box 7 Site 1 RR 1
Legal, Alberta T0G 1L0

1993-6-7

Gotta agree with some points of your review of ON SPEC.

But these aren't the cutting edge stories, they're stories that are over the edge of safe territory. I thought the art in that issue was marvelous. I am pleased that while every story and poem I send the editorial collective gets pleasantly rejected (except for the first, which was in Vol. 1, No. 2), I am at any rate in good company. Everyone's been rejected by ON SPEC, including Big Names. And the one story of mine they did buy was nominated for a Casper/Aurora that year. They still gotta reach the cutting edge, though long trip.

FROM: Gary Deindorfer
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Trenton, New Jersey 08618

1993-5-20

Nice to hear about some of the new zines. I think there are enough fanzines being published, but the different groups of people are not sufficiently aware of each other. The idea has not occurred to them to coordinate their fanzine groups into megagroups, said groups being able to send fanzines back and forth, creating a megagalaxadom. (Maybe we don't need that).

[This was the great thing about FACTSHEET FIVE, being able to browse amongst other worlds of zinedom and find new ones that one would ordinarily never hear of. There will always be groups that seldom intersect; I doubt that many SFers would take in creationist rants, or wrestling fans read jazz reviews. But I have found a number of non-SF zines of great interest, such as the Art Strike zines or DISHWASHER. One area of concern is the lack of The Usual in other zinedoms; many zines will trade, but I've noticed many non-SF zines do not supply copies simply for a loc. And very few know of the history of zines from the 1930s SF fans. Having said this, I will say that non-SF zines are in general more exciting to read than SF zines, more on the cutting edge that everyone seems to be so anxious to be on.]

FROM: Joseph Major
4701 Taylor Boulevard #8
Louisville, Kentucky 40215-2343

1993-5-26

Steve George would seem to be running into the paradox of qualitative selection. We see the outstanding works of, say, the 1890s, and think it was a period of genius. What we do not see were the proliferation of trash works that made those living through it long for the past when people were putting out stuff that was really good without all that modern-day trash. For example, the biographies of Sir H. Rider Haggard I have read make a point of listing some of the sharecropped sequels, satires, and spin-offs of SHE. Yet they are forgotten now. I did once see one, republished in a specialty academic reprint series, THE KING OF KOR, a sequel to SHE that has the characters returning to Africa. When Haggard finally did a sequel, he had them doing something different, going to central Asia (Tibet, Turkestan, Sinkiang, and Mongolia). This is an example of why sharecropped sequels tend to be so bad; the sharecropper wants to repeat features of the original that were so striking, instead of being original. Though being original often tends to mean contradicting the original work, cf. GREAT KING'S WAR.

Robert Runté might be amused by an academic habit reported on in Charles Sykes' PROFSCAM, his bleak look at the dictatorship of the professoriat in American universities. Professorial curriculum vitae will often show repeated publication of the same paper in different journals. Combining this with his suggestion of professional status for fanzines, one can see: "Well, my paper on Captain Kirk as a foot fetishist was first published in THE U.S.S. DUMMY-BLIND JOURNAL, the St. Ghu Trekclubzine, then it went on to the EAST CENTRAL NORTHWEST TREKKER NEWSLETTER, and now I am hoping that the SLASH GAZETTE will take it."

[Repeated publication of the same paper under different titles and rewritten to a slightly different emphasis is extremely annoying when I skim the current periodicals at

the University library. I don't blame the authors but rather the universities which decide tenure partly on the basis of quantity of publications. There recently was a proposal that academics should be judged only on their best five publications, which seems a better method.]

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

1993-5-31

[In OPUNTIA #12.1, Harry had mentioned a production of LOHENGRIN that dispensed with the swan, and I had asked how that could be done.]

The Met's production of LOHENGRIN uses for the first and third acts a set which is supposed to represent a high bank overlooking the river upstage. The river is invisible to the audience, and the arrivals and departures of Lohengrin are accomplished simply by going upstage and presumably climbing the slope. Elsa's brother makes his appearance at the end of the opera in the same way. The chorus pretends to be watching the arrival and departure of the swan boat by looking toward where the river is supposed to be.

Those titles proposed by Robert Runté for a scholars' apa have a defect. Most of them lack a colon. There seems to be some sort of law that the title of any scholarly paper, dissertation, periodical article, or book must have a colon somewhere in the title.. Nobody has ever explained to me why this should be so, but it might be a subconscious realization that those writings and the colon have the same sort of contents.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Brian Earl Brown, Chester Cuthbert, Ian Elliot, Elizabeth Garrott, Mark Harris, Pete Jordan, Robert Lichtman, Mark Manning, Lloyd Penney, Jenny Glover, and Steve Speir.

THE REFERENDUM THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME

Newfoundland was England's first colony. It became a Dominion but in 1933 went bankrupt amidst rioting and civil disorder. Britain took it back as a colony and imposed direct rule. Years later more argument and disruption, as Newfies disputed whether the restoration of better economic times meant that the island (and Labrador) should return to responsible government, merge with Canada, or even with the United States. The matter was settled by a referendum in 1948, giving the people a choice between a return to responsible government (that is, Dominion status) or confederating with Canada. Québec was opposed to Newfoundland entering Confederation; to this day it still claims most of Labrador belongs to it. The Newfies were of divided mind, and the referendum favoured confederating by only 52% of the vote. Some say the vote was fixed, and a massive conspiracy existed to push Newfoundland into Canada.

The movie SECRET NATION takes up on that belief. Members of the Codco comedy troupe have produced a fascinating scenario. There are no overt laughs in this movie, but quite a few smiles and a gripping suspense storyline. The star is Cathy Jones (her brother directed) who plays a history graduate student at McGill University in Montreal. She comes back to St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland, to continue her research on how it entered Confederation and hoping to convince her father to tell what he knows. He was one of the negotiating team trying to re-establish Newfoundland as an independent Dominion. Frieda cannot get her father to talk, so she begins researching elsewhere, trying to find out if the rumours of the conspiracy are true. She is unknowingly followed by the ghost of the secretary who took confidential dictation in 1948 for the referendum committee and was later drowned in mysterious circumstances just after Confederation.

Frieda discovers that there was a conspiracy, and that

the British Colonial Office had infiltrated an informer into the responsible-government faction. The chase is on and she will stop at nothing to find out the details. She takes a competing historian to bed in order to sneak a look at his research work; he in turn seduces the archivist at the Public Records Office so he can get past her to the documents of the vote count supposedly sealed for fifty years. Frieda interviews Joey Smallwood at his deathbed but gets no answers. He was the man who led the pro-Confederation forces and became Newfoundland's first premier. There are men in trenchcoats trying to destroy all documents about the matter, but Frieda manages to steal the true vote record. She also discovers the identity of the traitor to the cause of independent Newfoundland. Her father. The referendum had actually been for Dominion status, but the conspiracy altered the vote count in favour of confederating. Her shock at discovering her father a spy and turncoat turns her life upside-down.

The climax of the movie is simply the publication of Frieda's thesis as a book. There are no shootouts and the closest one gets to violence is the burning of incriminating documents in a furnace. Those involved in the British Colonial Office conspiracy to dump Newfoundland on Canada are mostly dead of old age. The conspiracy won; its discovery is merely of historical interest, for Newfoundland is now too tightly wrapped up in Confederation to undo what has happened.

There are some subtle touches of humour and sly digs at Newfie life. We see television news reports through the movie, but the newsreader is not some bubbly blonde or vacuous baritone racing along with today's headlines. Instead a bearded chap slowly plods along with the news, reading it at a measured pace that would get him fired at any mainland TV station.

THE PRAIRIE LAWYER AND THE PRINCEMAKER

John George Diefenbaker was a Saskatchewan barrister who made good, evolving from a defender of the working class into a prairie populist who wrested control of the federal Progressive Conservatives away from the incompetents of Bay Street (Canada's equivalent of Wall Street). After decades of living in the Opposition wilderness, the Tory party returned to power under him. But they grew restive and evicted him in a slugfest that ensured them fifteen years as Opposition before Mulroney restored their fortunes. Dief the Chief, as he was known, was destroyed by a conspiracy led by Dalton Camp, a man who would be king, failed at it, tried to be a kingmaker instead, but only produced a prince from Nova Scotia who fell before the charisma of Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Diefenbaker made party leader after many failed attempts. In 1957, the governing Liberals were pushed out in an election that brought Dief and the Tories a minority government. Lester Pearson, Liberal leader, tried to defeat the Tories in the House of Commons by proposing a non-confidence motion which suggested that the Tories hand back the government to the Grits without the fuss of an election. This extraordinary motion was the worst error in Canadian political history. Dief called Pearson out on the bluff by dissolving the House and going to another election. The Tories obliterated the other parties and in March 1958 were returned to office with the largest majority in federal history.

But while Dief was Canada's best orator, he was not very good as a prime minister. In the 1962 election, Tories went back to a minority government. They staggered from crisis to crisis, including the Night of the Long Knives, when most of Dief's cabinet ministers resigned. In 1963 the Grits won a minority government, and Dief was never again P.M.. (He died in 1979, by which time he was still an M.P., albeit a maverick backbencher.) In 1964, Dief became the target of a conspiracy led by Dalton Camp, a

process that took three years to work but at a tremendous cost to the Tories. The downfall of the Chief is covered in a 1971 book by his loyal aide James Johnston, called THE PARTY'S OVER.

At the 1964 annual meeting of the federal Tories, an advertising executive named Dalton Camp was elected by acclamation to party president. Until that time, the president had always been an M.P.. The post was considered unimportant by all Tories except Camp. There already were mutterings against Dief, not from M.P.s who knew he was the only one who could keep the Grits from getting a majority government, but from Toronto business executives who didn't like Dief. No one had the courage to directly challenge him, but Dief wasn't entirely unaware of what was going on. He stood before the delegates and thundered out at them, "You know where I stand. I want to know where you stand."

By 1965, Camp had subverted the party executive and had them on his side, but the Commons caucus was still solidly for Dief, so the rebellion had to go underground. There was an election that year; the Grits were thought able to get a majority, but Dief spoiled their plans and kept them as a minority government. He did so by ignoring the dull policies and incompetent strategies put forth by the Camp faction, which would have given the Liberals a strong majority. Dief knew more about electioneering than they did. Despite Dief saving the Tories from disaster, Camp kept the rebellion simmering quietly in the backrooms.

The 1966 annual meeting was postponed from March to November. The original idea for postponement was that of the Camp faction so they would have more time for organizing a coup. Dief, however, went along with the delay because he was tied up in the Commons with a political crisis. Camp couldn't restrain himself, and in September called for a leadership review. His call was made at a meeting of the Toronto Junior Board of

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Trade. Few of the audience were Tories; many were Grits or New Democratic Party (social democrat), so naturally they cheered Camp. At that time the Tories were close to the Liberals in the opinion polls, but following Camp's attack on Dief, party popularity went into freefall. Camp used the youth wing of the party to harass Dief; they were not at all representative of the party.

In THE PARTY'S OVER, James Johnston makes note of the remarkable fact that he and Camp were almost twins in physical appearance. Johnston, ever loyal to Dief, was constantly mistaken for Camp and took abuse intended for the other. Throughout 1966 there were party meetings across Canada where motions were passed supporting Dief or calling for a leadership review. The two factions fought their way back and forth across the map. At one meeting, Camp and Johnston were seated at opposite ends of the head table. Writes Johnston, "... a photographer addressed me as 'Mr. Camp' and I replied. The photographer then realized his mistake, but I kept insisting that I was Camp and was against Diefenbaker while the man at the end of the table was a Diefenbaker flunkie named Johnston from Ottawa. Camp did not think this was funny and began insisting that he was Camp and that I was not."

For the first time, the position of party president was important to contest for. Camp, previously acclaimed in the post, ran for re-election against a Dief loyalist Arthur Maloney. It was a battle by proxy at that annual meeting in 1966. Camp packed the audience with his supporters, who booed Dief. Televised by CBC, that meeting not only helped destroy Dief, it also damaged the Progressive Conservatives badly in the public eye. Both the agenda and the party-by-laws were ignored in the fracas. Maloney is today a forgotten man, but he is forever enshrined in Canadian history books as a footnote for his statement "When John Diefenbaker enters a room, Arthur Maloney stands up.". (When Dief entered the meeting, the Camp supporters remained sitting.) Dief also got a famous line out after the meeting: "The papers say Dalton

Camp is revolting. I cannot disagree."

Knowing that the meeting was stacked against him, Dief tried to save face by calling for a leadership convention. In the following months there was much pushing and shoving between the two factions for control of the concom. There were numerous preliminary meetings, including a policy session that proposed the disastrous 'two nations' policy. Dief was always a One Canada man (he even used that phrase as the title of his memoirs) and managed to at least cripple that horse before it got out of the gate. Delegate fraud was a commonplace thing; many who voted at the leadership convention in September 1967 had no real connection to the Tories.

There were eleven candidates in the race. Dief put his name in at the last moment. On the first ballot, Dief placed fifth. Robert Stanfield (Premier of Nova Scotia) was first and Duff Roblin (Premier of Manitoba) in second. Camp did not run; Stanfield and Roblin were both part of his faction. On the second ballot, Dief finished even further down. He withdrew before the third round, although there wasn't time to remove his name from the ballots. Stanfield finally won on the fifth ballot.

Dief became a backbencher and stayed one to his death in his office in 1979. Stanfield was run over by the Trudeau bandwagon and was never more than Opposition Leader. The Tories had a minority government for a few months in 1979 but it wasn't until 1984 that they regained the government. The Grits became known as the Natural Governing Party, having held power from 1963 to 1984 (except the brief Tory interregnum of Joe Clark). Camp had hoped to be a kingmaker. Instead, he was a princemaker, and the damage he did took fifteen years to repair.

TO INSURE PROMPTNESS

One never ceases to be amazed at what subjects people can write books about. I picked up a paperback original from the Co-op Book Exchange called ALL ABOUT TIPPING. I can believe that it is easy to write a magazine article about tipping, but an entire book?

Personally I seldom tip. Of course I seldom eat in the same restaurant twice, but I figure that since Calgary is overrun with a couple thousand eateries, by the time I work my way around the cycle they will have forgotten me. They open and close so fast that my definition of an optimist is someone who thinks he can run a restaurant at a profit.

ALL ABOUT TIPPING was written by Jean Sprain Wilson, an Associated Press reporter, and published in 1965. There is a brief history of tipping, followed by two extensive sections on how much to tip, the first arranged by subject (doorman, bellhop, etc.), and the second by country.

The etymology of the word 'tip' is alleged to have come from Samuel Johnson and his literary circle. At their gatherings in the pub, they spent so much time arguing the issues of the day that they did not consume ale as fast as the barkeep would like. So he made up a wooden bowl with the words "To Insure Promptness" inscribed on it; the serving wench would pass it around the table of literary lions. So writes Wilson, but my dictionary says the word dates back to at least 1610; the celebrated Johnson can be forgiven this sin.

In 1905 the Anti-Tipping Society of America was formed, and within a few years six states had outlawed the practice. Alas, the legislation was deemed unconstitutional in 1919. There was, and may still be, a Tipsters Anonymous society.

TRIVIA OR SENSATION? TELEVISION DURING ROMAN TIMES

About six months ago, I noticed a 1966 paperback in the Co-op Book Exchange, titled THE DAVIDSON AFFAIR, by Stuart Jackman (Faber & Faber). The blurb hailed it as a fantasy about a television reporter chasing a story during the days of ancient Rome. Today we would call it an alternative history, but back then it was labelled fiction-fantasy. Checking the first page of text, I saw a play script format. I don't like to read scripts because the stage directions interfere with the story, making it harder to read along, and, more importantly, cannot get the strength of the story over in the same way as if it were performed. So I put the book back; on a later visit it was gone. But it reappeared in the Book Exchange a few days ago, and this time I took it, as I discovered that the script was only the first page and the rest of the book was text.

THE DAVIDSON AFFAIR is the story of Cass Tennel, reporter with JTVI in Jerusalem, and a stringer for ITC (Imperial Television Corporation, headquartered Rome). This is the ancient Roman Empire in a universe where they had television. And, logically enough, because TV could not have developed in isolation, cars and airplanes. No other gimmicks (why do so many authors ruin their alternative histories by bringing in telepathy or other non-consistent nonsense?), just a reporter on a story about rumours of a dead man being revived. The search to find Davidson is a sequence of interviewing the logical suspects. Davidson himself is never found and makes no major part of the novel. Rather the story concentrates on his effect on people who knew him.

Tennel begins with pressure from his boss to watch his step; the story could be political dynamite. Davidson was hanged on a Friday. The body was to have been put into a shallow prison grave and quicklived, the usual treatment for executed traitors, but a friend of Davidson supplied a tomb. Davidson's supporters seemed likely to cause trouble, so a guard from the Jewish

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Army was posted at the tomb. Something went wrong on the weekend and the tomb was discovered open and empty, the body missing. Rumours have spread that Davidson had been resurrected. The Jewish populace are a bundle of nerves at the best of times, and their Roman overlords want the whole thing hushed up.

Tennel's first interview is with Pontius Pilate, the unhappy Governor-General stuck in a backwater of the Roman Empire in the declining days of his career. Pilate is defensive about the necessity of ordering Davidson's execution: "He claimed to be the king of the Jews. ... I gave him all the help I could. Bent over backwards to give him a chance to clear himself. But it was no use. ... In the end I had no choice but to sign the execution order."

THE DAVIDSON AFFAIR progresses in this manner, one interview after another. It makes for compelling reading, although each chapter is a flashback from Tennel in the present as he edits the final cut of the film. Somewhat annoying but not fatally so.

From Pilate, Tennel goes to the tomb, where rubberneckers cluster about, and where Tennel tries to get the guard commander Major Sanballet to say something useful. But, like the Desert Storm news briefers, he is not exactly a fount of information. His duty is to refuse comment, not provide news copy. Tennel gets nothing that couldn't be found elsewhere.

Next up is a Jewish priest, Jacob Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, the religious council that tried Davidson and convicted him. After a bit of shadowboxing between him and Tennel about the trial, Tennel scores the final point: "You've said the charge against him was one of blasphemy. ... And yet he was executed as a traitor, an enemy of the State rather than of the Church. Can you perhaps explain how a man charged with blasphemy can be executed for high treason?" Nicodemus has no answer.

Tennel drives out to Jericho to interview Regem Zaccheus, the head tax collector for that town, and hated by all the citizenry. But Davidson had stopped to talk to him while on a walkabout, and converted him to the cause. As Tennel arrives, Zaccheus is emptying out his house and donating all his worldly goods to charity. (In a bit of humour, Zaccheus mistakes the reporter for a moving labourer and tells him to fetch the bedding.) Zaccheus is heading for Galilee, where the revived Davidson told his followers to meet him. Tennel is told that Mary Magdala, a stripper in Jerusalem, might help him. But there is a curfew, and the city gates are blocked by an army patrol when Tennel returns. He tries to talk his way in but is unsuccessful ("Remind me to send a big donation to the Society for the Suppression of Orderly Officers ..."). While still outside the city, he meets up with a truck driver, Thomas Didymus, who is a follower of Davidson but refuses to believe the resurrection until he sees with his own eyes that Davidson is alive.

The next morning, after curfew, Tennel finds Magdala and interviews her. She is quite calm and logical, a good exponent of Davidson's philosophy. But television being what it is, Tennel films a strip club scene to use as a background for her interview, "for contrast". She has seen Davidson after the resurrection, put her arms around him, received his message to tell others to meet him in Galilee.

Two more interviews, with the High Priest of Jewry and with a Joe Citizen type who saw the resurrected Davidson perform miracles, and Tennel has his TV show in the can. When the show is aired, Tennel is tensed for big trouble, from the Roman overlords, from the Jewish high command. But instead, he gets four calls, three from people offended by the strip club scene, and one from a man who wanted Magdala's vital statistics. For Tennel has forgotten that television trivializes all that it touches. Davidson is just one more sensation

among an endless multitude paraded across the screen. If the divorce of an actress gets the same or greater coverage as a resurrection, and the TV viewer is constantly exposed to a flood of images, how can one expect people to be excited? Can any of us doubt that if a Messiah was to appear today the first response of the TV networks will be to put in a bid to have him on a talk show? If Oprah interviews him, will the viewers think of him differently than her other guests, the women abused by their parents, the compulsive-obsessives, the people with the disease of the month?

Tennel is changed by the people he meets; he has talked to them face-to-face. But try as he might, he cannot get the emotions across to the viewers, nor the belief. The video box is just a new type of fireplace, to sit in front of and eat or gossip. Tennel's producer tells him: "You can't change the world, the great greedy, frightened viewing public, with a handful of wise sayings, a seasoning of compassion, and a miracle or two."

"Even if one of the miracles is a dead man come back to life?"

"Not even then. ... It's no use, Cass. We like it in prison. We don't want to be rescued."

YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE

During my regular circuit of Calgary's secondhand bookstores, I bought a nice little pamphlet published in 1962 by the Calgary Target Area Civil Defence, titled IF WAR SHOULD COME. Since American and Russian missiles would intercept each other over Canadian territory, the fear of nuclear war by Albertans had reasonable cause. IF WAR SHOULD COME was subtitled as information for the use of residents in Calgary, Bowness, Montgomery, and parts of the counties of Foothills and Rockyview (all of these are now absorbed into Calgary). It gave basic instruction on what to do in case of nuclear attack and what evacuation

routes to use. There is no attempt to sugarcoat the expected results of an attack; "The Government believes if Canada were attacked, Calgary would be one of the more likely target areas. On the assumption that nothing worse than a 5-megaton weapon were used it can be assumed that the City of Calgary, and parts of the immediately surrounding areas, would be effectively destroyed."

Although the possibility of hiding in shelters is discussed, the text makes it clear that the only chance is to run for it. "Shelters against blast in the City of Calgary would be so expensive as to be beyond the means of most people." There are lists and maps of where to evacuate, and in themselves they are quite sobering. Bowness residents, for example, are advised to flee to Kimberly, British Columbia. Most sites are about 100 km or so from Calgary. The pamphlet notes without passion that roads might be impassable in winter, and "You could run into a random bomb explosion on the road where you would be without protection."

IF WAR SHOULD COME lists the effects of an atomic explosion, being light (blindness), heat (fire will be caused in anything ignitable up to a distance of 20 miles), immediate radiation (fatal within 2 miles but relatively harmless beyond that), fallout, and blast. A table lists the effects of blast; complete destruction within 3 miles, damaged beyond repair up to 5 miles, and serious damage up to 10 miles. "The chances of survival in a basement have been assessed as follows: up to 3 miles from burst - negligible, from 3 to 5 miles - slight, from 5 to 10 miles from burst - fair, from 10 to 15 miles from burst - good." In 1962, Calgary had a radius of about 6 miles, so the average citizen knew he didn't have much chance. Warning time? Says the pamphlet: "... the plainest of plain facts in this matter is that no one knows, and no one can tell."

We'll all go together when we go.

Recently the Minister of Fisheries shut down the fishing fleet in Newfoundland for several years, to allow stocks to recover from overfishing. Foreign countries still have trawlers near Newfoundland, a fact that has made Newfies angry and brought the Minister's career to an early end. The movie BURIED ON SUNDAY is a satire about this disaster.

BURIED ON SUNDAY is set on the fictitious island Solomon Gundy, off the coast of Nova Scotia. Two Ottawa bureaucrats, Dexter and Noel, have arrived bearing a videotape from the Minister of Fisheries and Atmosphere informing the islanders that their fishing fleet is to be shut down for three years. Ostensibly the reason is depleted fish stocks. The secret reason is that Ottawa made a deal with Belgium; in exchange for a Canadian firm selling smoke-stack scrubbers to a Belgian utility, Belgium will get a quota of fish at the expense of Solomon Gundy.

The crowd forms a lynch mob, with Dexter as guest of honour. The mayor of Solomon Gundy stops the lynching just as Dexter is about to dangle from the rope. Noel is not harmed, perhaps because she is needed as a love interest for Augustus, the mayor.

While this is going on, a Russian boomer, a submarine carrying nuclear missiles, runs into trouble offshore. It comes into harbour piloted by the few crew members who did not abandon ship with the officers (whose liferaft is picked up by an offshore oil rig). The crew, lead by the ship's cook, who is the ranking officer, are pleased to sell the missiles to Augustus for \$25 hard currency. The Republic of Solomon Gundy is declared, and one of the missiles is targeted to Mount Rushmore, on the excellent theory that "An American target will capture Ottawa's attention far more than a Canadian one." [An explanation to my non-Canadian readers: This movie was made when Brian Mulroney was still Prime Minister. One reason why Mulron-

ey was so unpopular was because he was an American lapdog who sucked up to Reagan and Bush, and copied many of their policies.]

The movie is badly flawed by frequent interruptions in the action for no apparent reason. Whenever a flowing narrative gets going, there is a sudden halt so some character can get off a banal soliloquy. Dexter is the doomed character. He converts from bureaucrat to supporter of the Gundyites. "You've gone native, Dexter" complains a mandarin sent out from Ottawa. Dexter relaxes by going out into a graveyard and lying down on a grave. Asks the minister, "What are you doing?". "Practicing", replies Dexter. He gets it when CAF gunships looking for the Russian sub strafe the harbour.

The Republic of Solomon Gundy, which subtitles itself as a "GST-free State", negotiates with Ottawa. The two nuclear missiles on board are programmed by a lunatic officer who dies by spontaneous combustion. During a break in negotiations, Noel and Augustus go into the deserted sub and get hot and heavy. They are at the ripping-each-other's-shirts-off stage of making love when Noel happens to glance at the missiles. She is horrified to see the readouts on the missiles are counting down; with the launch officer dead, no one knows how to stop them. Probably the worst case yet of coitus interruptus.

By now the ship's officers have been picked up off the oil rig, and are flown to Solomon Gundy to disable the missiles. "You called your own bluff" says the Ottawa mandarin. But one missile is accidentally launched, the one aimed at Mount Rushmore. Fortunately it was a dud and only breaks off one of the presidential noses. The fishing quotas are restored to Solomon Gundy when the Belgian utility, which is Dutch, cancels the deal on discovering that the Belgians who get the fish are French. Biculturalism is not only a Canadian problem.

BURIED ON SUNDAY has another flaw besides the slow pace; it fails to develop the characters properly. Gundyites declare a republic because the town librarian discovered that the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht gave the island the right to secede if they were not happy with central rule (the island was originally colonized by Dutch fisherfolk). The librarian is a dear old lady, the ideal grandmother type, who speaks in a soft voice. Trouble is, she tends to use Marxist dialectic in her conversations, baffling the uneducated villagers and bringing to a complete stop a town hall meeting when she explains the marginalized nature of a resource-based economy, etc.. But from there, she disappears for the rest of the movie. It would have been more fun and more logical to have her on the negotiating committee, and watch the reaction of Ottawa mandarins confronted by a dear old lady twisting their words against them.

Augustus, the mayor, is also a Protestant minister with no visible congregation. He has a drinking problem, and in one of those slow bits that delays the movie, tells Noel that he does not believe in God. From this point, the matter is never referred to again, so we are at a loss to understand why he still wears an ecclesiastical collar, or why he has so much influence over the villagers. He is also fluent in Russian, a bit of *deus ex machina* that is hard to swallow, but, I suppose, can be justified by the fact that somebody has to be able to communicate with the Russian submarine crew.

Another sidelight never expanded upon is the rumour-mongering old coot who tells stories about witches and identifies Noel as one. But nothing happens; Noel does not even seem to be aware of what he is saying about her, and while the villagers listen in fascination to his stories about witches and ghost ships, they do nothing more.

BURIED ON SUNDAY is playing in the repertoire theatres, and so will not get the large audience it should have for a topical satire. A shame, because it does score some nice touches.

Sharyn McCrumb's two novels about SF fandom, *BIMBOS OF THE DEATH SUN* and *ZOMBIES OF THE GENE POOL*, have stirred up considerable angst among those who feels her barbs have hit too close to home. In *BIMBOS* she goes after con fans, while *ZOMBIES* savages a group of old-time zine pubbers. Her descriptions are reasonably accurate. I noticed a few minor errors, but by and large the people described are true to life. As murder mysteries, these novels will be forgotten in the outside world but their bitter memory will linger in SFdom.

As a psychological study of the author, they are very revealing of her thought patterns. It was for this that I find the novels interesting reading, for McCrumb has put herself into these books in more ways than one.

Through both novels the point is hammered in again and again that fandom is a waste of time and people should be using their talents to earn money instead of doing zines and costumes. In *BIMBOS*, for example, she writes: "Imagine working for six months on a costume that you'll only get to wear once or twice a year, instead of going into dress designing or some other profession related to that skill, where you could actually accomplish something." A zine pubber in *ZOMBIES* is put down for not having grown up; he could be selling his articles. It appears that she is unsympathetic with the idea of hobbies, and unwilling to concede that money and ambition are not the motivating factors for everyone. Her facts are mostly correct but her interpretation of those facts shows clearly that for her, no activity is justifiable unless it leads to money or a better job. A costumer may not want to be a dress designer, and may only do it as a hobby. I couldn't help but think that home gardeners are at fault in McCrumb's thinking because they grow flowers for beauty and not the florist market. After all, it is a waste to grow such beautiful roses in one's yard and not sell them in a shop. I wonder if McCrumb keeps a garden?

YOU ARE OLD, FATHER WILLIAM

Many lost ancient texts are known to have existed only because Plato or somebody mentioned them in passing, or perhaps condemned the book in some libelous review. The title is known, perhaps a general idea of the contents, but the book itself has vanished, never copied by some industrious monk, or the only existing copy destroyed in a library fire.

Other literary works may still exist but might be forgotten completely had there not been some circumstance to keep it in memory. An example of this is the poem "The Old Man's Comforts And How He Gained Them", a lecture in rhyme about the necessity of saving for one's old age. It is remembered only because Lewis Carroll parodied it in ALICE IN WONDERLAND as "You are old, father William". But the original still exists to compare with, even though only the parody is read today.

While books may be lost, they can at least be read at any time down through the ages, as long as the language is still known. And so we come to ANSIBLE #69 (published by Dave Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AU, England. Available for SASEs or £12/year). This issue is a fascinating read for those still worried by computers, and fear for their data everytime the room lights flicker from a power surge. The article of interest here is on the second edition of THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF SF. The first edition was about 730,000 words; the second ran 1,300,000 words. Every word of which had to be retyped because the original text was carefully preserved on floppies which subsequently became obsolete when the typesetting machine that could read them was scrapped. Second time around all concerned vowed to keep the new set of disks useable. Only to discover that said disks could only be read by the typesetter machine, not the editorial computers or the computers that were to convert the text to CD-ROM. It reminds me of my college days back in the early 1970s, an innocent time when you keypunched your programs onto a

deck of cards. Today, one is urged to always make a backup of the current disk, but in those days the rule was to always number your cards, so that if you dropped the deck you could still put the program back together. As for preserving the programs for posterity, good luck finding a card reader or keypunch machine.

DISHWASHER: THE COMIC BOOK (SOON TO BE A MINOR VIDEO)

Okay, I don't know about the video but issue #10 of DISHWASHER is in fact a special comics issue. A variety of artists, all on the same subject. Andy Upright starts off with his experiences in a large hospital as part of a five-person dishcrew. When not required for dishwashing, he helped make toast on a machine that toasted an entire loaf at once. There is a reprint from a short-lived zine THE DISHWASHER'S QUARTERLY, which leads me to wonder if a whole genre could be established on the subject. (And why not? There are more people who wash dishes than read SF.) Speaking of which, there is a very well drawn excerpt from THE MUNDANE ADVENTURES OF DISHMAN by John MacLeod. Imagine a superhero whose only ability is to point at dirty dishes and have them instantaneously washed, dried and put away. Pete Jordan, the editor of this zine, also chips in with an account of his dishdoings. US\$1 from DISHWASHER, Box 4827, Arcata, California 95521.

NEWS FROM THE EASTERN REALM

From Austria is THE GALACTO-CELTIC NEWSFLASH #4, newszine and loczine, in English for those who want an eye on European fandom. #4 has an extract from a 14-page loc written by Swedish fan Holger Eliasson on how a piece of performance art in Salzburg saved his life. A lengthy piece that starts off slow and builds to a fascinating finish. The Usual from Franz Miklis, A-5151 Nussdorf 64, Austria.

I ONLY BUY IT FOR THE ARTICLES

From Victoria, B.C., wends the fourth issue of UNDER THE OZONE HOLE, with a colour cover showing a well known fan from Lethbridge stitched into a Star Trek uniform by the wonders of colour Xerox and D.T.P.. Three lovely women clutch at him. Proclaims the headline: "Admiral Runté trapped on a planet of desperate women with a secret". I am not certain from this whether it is Runté or the women who has/have the secret. And at the back of the zine, Laura Atkins writes about the Impossible Battle Bikini she designed for a Norwescon. She provided a photo of herself wearing it, what little there was of it. Whew! I had to go take a long cold shower before I could finish reading this zine.

Mostly locs, reviews, media news, and editorials. Runté has a reprint of his guide to fandom, this being part one on "When To Quit". Such as showing up at the con and the registrar tries to recruit you to fandom. Or winning a fan award for lifetime achievement. Or only recognizing names in the obits. I liked the one about a rap group called "APA and the BNFs".

The Usual via Karl Johanson, 4129 Carey Road, Victoria, British Columbia, V8Z 4G5.

LOOKING FOR A REPLACEMENT ...

... for FACTSHEET FIVE and finding ANGRY THOREAUAN. This zine originates from California; it reviews zines from everywhere, music albums likewise, and rock bands in the southern California area. Locs mostly feuding, and folks seem unfriendly to a producer/nightclub owner known to have stifled a few bands. Lots of zine reviews of weird stuff. The chartered banks in Calgary are wondering why I want so many \$1 American banknotes, I'm sending off for so many sample copies. The live band reviews all seem to start off with an apology by the reviewer because he was late getting there, having either gotten lost on the way

or having stopped en route for a drink. US\$3 for a copy from Box 2246, Anaheim, California 92814.

LIVE ON TAPE

TROOP LIBRARIAN is a monthly audio cassette compiling music or spoken words of a variety of different folks, and concludes with the reading of locs. #4 was the May 1993 issue. About half of it is by groups who deserve to remain in obscurity; either that or learn how to play a stringed instrument instead of just strumming it. But a few good pieces. Coming from a ranch as I do, I thought Bob 'Jugular' Bobcat's piece on how he wanted to live with a herd of cattle and become one of them was particularly funny. There are several cuts of the Hilliard Brothers, who recorded their music in the 1930s in a booth at the county fair in Grapevine, Texas. Very interesting liner notes. US\$3 per tape from Troop Librarian, Box 480, Arcata, California 95521.

CONNECTING THE UNDERGROUND ...

... is the zine THE SUB-LINK, a freebie musiczine in Calgary (you can probably get it for a couple of bucks via Box 72150, Calgary, Alberta T2V 5H9). This is a zine by and for ravers/house fans. The August 1993 issue has a debate on the future of rave. Like most underground fads, it is noticeably changing and being taken over by commercial interests. The younger ravers are complaining there aren't as many all-age raves as they would like; older ravers are complaining about underagers; both young and old defend their culture against metal, granolas, and headbangers. Actually, as I read this zine I began smiling, it sounds so much like SF fans complaining about all those damn Trekkies and gamers. The Calgary rave scene is evolving, and some purists don't like it. Right now, the mainstream in Calgary doesn't know rave exists here; once local

[continued next page]

newspapers begin writing it up ("Kids 'Rave' To Music"), and local radio stations start playing it ("Not Too Hard, Not Too Soft. The Right Mix of Rave"), then we'll know it will be dead as punk.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO NOSTALGIA?

I've made it a point to concentrate review issues of this zine on older books rather than current bestsellers. All the new stuff is well taken care of elsewhere. I still reserve the right to do an occasional current book (and do) but by and large I want to remind the world of older books that can only be found in secondhand stores. The last thing we need is yet another review of the latest Discworld novel.

Another person who feels that way is Mark Harris, who has started up a zine REDISCOVERIES NEWSLETTER, in which people contribute capsule reviews of their favourite older books. A blank form is provided for loccers to fill in data about such books; the forms are printed by photocopy as received. #10 is now out and has some interesting and probably unobtainable books for suggested reading. One example is A BUDGET OF PARADOXES, by Augustus de Morgan, who spent his life fighting circle-squarers and Base 16 proponents. The mathematical wars of the late 1800s were apparently a lot hotter than what they have today.

The Usual from Mark Harris, 3712 North Broadway #190, Chicago, Illinois 60613.

BUT WILL IT SOLVE THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS?

OSFS STATEMENT is the clubzine of the Ottawa SF Society. They have a new address: 251 Nepean Street, Ottawa, K2P 0B7. Like many other Canadians they have suffered at the hands of privatized Canada Post operations. (The post office in Canada is abandoning frontline services with

the general public and contracting out services to private contractors. Canada Post intends to eventually handle only sorting of mail and business customers. No lettercarrier service is provided to new houses and a box number can only be obtained from contractors such as 7-11 convenience stores. That's right; minimum wage clerks now run post offices which are simply a counter in a 7-11 store. I pick up the mail for the Calgary Aquarium Society, who were forced to move to a new box number in a 7-11. I suspect that eventually the downtown post office where Box 6830 is located will be closed.)

The usual reviews, locs, announcements, and such that you would expect to see in a clubzine. There is a back page advertisement for Continuity 2000-2001, the proposed twin Worldcons. As the ad says, "As defined in the Constitution of the World SF Society, the City of Ottawa resides in the Central Region as part of Ontario. Across the river, the City of Hull is in the Eastern Region, as part of Quebec. This would allow the cities of Ottawa/Hull to bid for the Worldcon on any two consecutive years, where the rotation is Central/Eastern." [For bidding purposes, North America is divided in three, like Gaul, for Worldcons, and site selection rotates in the order of Western, Central, and Eastern.] What is interesting about this is that while Ottawa is in the Central region and Hull is in the Eastern (by Worldcon standards), Hull is actually west of Ottawa. One of those geographical quirks, like Detroit being north of Canada, or the Panama Canal running northwest to southeast, not east-west. The idea of two Worldcons in succession in the same metro area is an interesting one.

The Usual, from the address given earlier.

JOLLY GOOD SHOW, PIP PIP

Well, okay, I haven't met any Brits who still talk like that (more on the lines of "Where's ma fookin bloody beer, you fool?"). In any event, MATRIX #105 is at hand, the clubzine of the British SF Association. Lots of reviews, locs, contests, and such. Quite a bit of reading since 24 pages in microprint. An editorial on smoking, as the Isle of Wight proposes to be smokefree by 2000. Says the editorial: "I would question whether even a non-smoker would feel relaxed enough to enjoy a holiday in a place where smoking has been forbidden." I gather it is meant that no one likes to get a suntan where strict rule exists and the thought police are evident. But plenty of Europeans didn't mind holidaying in Spain during the Franco dictatorship, or Greece in the days of the colonels. One does enjoy a place where the locals are kept in their places. The Usual from Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP, England.

SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR

PROBE is the clubzine of Science Fiction South Africa but could just as easily be called a fictionzine, since its contents have traditionally run to a number of short stories. I don't know why some people complain there is no longer any place for fanfiction; between PROBE and NEO-PHYTE there should be lots of room for budding authors. PROBE #91 is 64 pages in digest format, mostly fiction, with locs and clubstuff. The Usual from SFSA, Box 781401, Sandton 2146, South Africa.

FROM ZED TO ZED

Two new zines. I received the first issues of ZUGZWANG, an Australian zine succeeding to PREFERRED LIES, and ZX, a Canadian zine out of British Columbia. ZUGZWANG gets its name from a chess term for a situation where any move

the player can make will only worsen matters. From the fifth page onward, we read about people who will eat anything, and I don't just mean English sausages. Such as Dr. Buckland who thought that moles were the worst tasting things he had eaten but later decided blue-bottle flies were even worse. Marc Ortlieb writes on the evolution of letters into apas and zines, illustrated with amusing little cartoons. Danny Heap goes on about self-mutilation (he likes to scar his chest with a razor blade). The Usual (no razor blades) from Kim Huett, Box 679, Woden ACT 2606, Australia.

I didn't notice anything about razor blades in ZX (did I ever mention that I have a beard? Besides hiding the double chin, it also keeps the face warmer in winter). Andrew Murdoch derived the title from Zine Experimental. A man after my own heart as he puts the staples on the top edge like OPUNTIA, instead of the left like all those other reactionary zines. Mostly reviews and personal comments, but a good start. The Usual from 2563 Heron Street, Victoria, British Columbia, V8R 5Z9.

NEWS FROM LEGUMINOUS FANS

MIMOSA is always good solid reading, well worth a Hugo and #14 is no exception. The emphasis is on fanhistory written in humorous fashion, with accounts of how it was twenty or thirty years pre-Trek up to modern time. Ahrvud Engholm writes about hoaxes; I liked the story about the fake Canadian fan who was honoured at a Swedish con. They probably could have caught him out if only they had asked about distinct societies and other Canadian constitutional esoterica. A nice set of covers on MIMOSA. The front shows some kids launching a rocket from a playground sandbox; the back shows that rocket coming down in an alien world towards an alien sandbox. The Usual from Dick and Nicki Lynch, Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875.