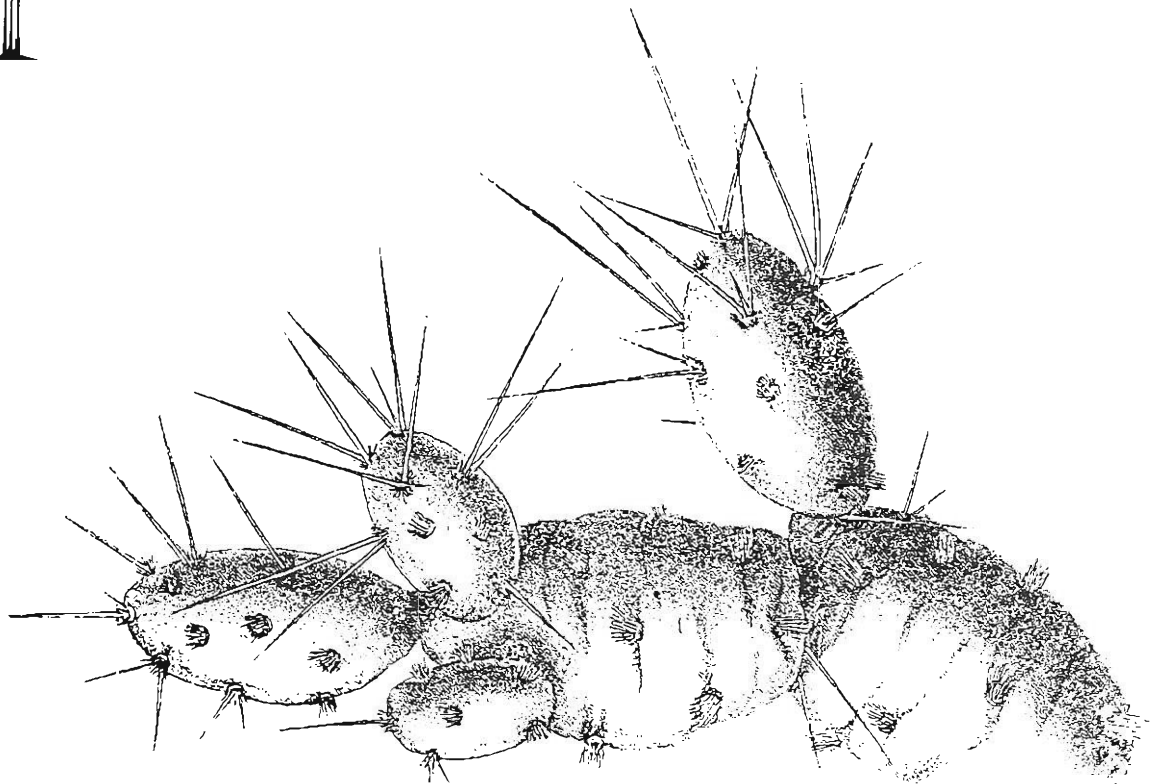


OPUNTIA

21.1



OPUNTIA #21.1

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OPUNTIA is published 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 boliviana* drawn by T. Gurke, from the 1973 book *THE SUBGENUS TEPHROCACTUS*, published by the Succulent Plant Trust, Morden, England.

EDITORIAL: I am seeking to obtain a copy of WIRED 2.04 to complete my set of this magazine. Write first advising me, so I don't get several copies when I only need one. I am unable to get the back issue from the WIRED publishers themselves. #2.04 contained an article on the Homolka murder case, which is the subject of a court order banning publication of information on it. The article had one sentence which gave the Canadian distributor cold feet, as a result of which we never saw the issue.

Before anyone hollers "Censorship!", I agree with the ban, even if the magazine distributor interpreted it too severely. In Canada, people are guaranteed fair trials without a media circus, not like the O.J. Simpson case.

ZINE REVIEWS

Unless otherwise specified, most zines are available for The Usual, which is \$2 cash, trade for your zine, or contribution such as letter of comment, artwork, or article. If you've never seen the zine, you are strongly advised to buy a sample copy first to ensure your contribution or trade is appropriate. Also, the issue reviewed may be out of print by the time you write for it, so you may have to wait a while for the next ish. Send banknotes, not cheques

to foreign countries, since bank charges are usually high and for a \$2 cheque are more than the value of the cheque. I've found from experience that zine pubbers as a group are excellent at responding if banknotes are sent. If the general public were as honest, the crime rate would be much reduced.

ACTION GIRL NEWSLETTER #9 (US\$2 per three issues or two IRCs per issue from Sarah Dyer, 543 Van Duzer Street, Staten Island, New York 10304) A reviewzine packed with capsule reviews of Riot Grrrl zines. This subculture is enthusiastic, what SF used to be fifty years ago. The editorial aims at young women, encouraging them to start their own bands, zines, labels, etc., instead of just mindlessly consuming. A fresh positive approach to life.

BOING BOING #12 (US\$14 for four issues via 544 Second Street, San Francisco, California 94107) I bought this at the newsagents but the editorial says all future ishs will be available only by subscription. They found out the hard way why wholesaler distribution has killed so many magazines. Like many of their ilk, this zine is a 'cutting edge' zine, a category becoming rather crowded. Full-colour cover done with graphics software, although I give them credit for good layout. Readable, not font berserk articles that jump over pages. In fact, one of the articles is about EMIGRE, a zine that challenges the tradition of Times Roman with constant typographical innovation. But most of BOING BOING is stuff seen in many other zines, all trying to stay ahead of the curve but coming off as clones of each other. Interviews with some alternative rock bands, a bit of SFish fiction, how to beat the system, the Internet, and an interview with William Gibson. One wonders how the man finds time to write, I've seen so many interviews of his popping up all over the place. BOING BOING is basically a pale copy of MONDO 2000, which in turn is a weak clone of WIRED. Good reading as far as it goes, but not going very far from the usual Come The Revolution stuff.

SLUG AND LETTUCE #35 (\$1 from Christine Boarts, Box 2067, Peter Stuy. Str., New York, New York 10009-8914) A news-print tabloid musiczine emphasizing D.I.Y. punk rock. An interesting article explaining why it is better to stay interesting instead of signing with a major label. The big labels suck bands in with large advances; the band is too naive to understand that an advance is just an interest free loan of their future income and that the band will have to pay all promotion and recording costs out of it. Lots of zine and underground music reviews.

WHITE TRASH #3 (The Usual from Thomas and Denise Longo, Box 130121, Roseville, Minnesota 55113-0121) This zine is to the right of FOSFAX, if such a thing is possible. A mixture of film, software, and baseball reviews, but the largest portion is Clinton-bashing. A story "Swastika House" tells about an elderly man who paints a large swastika on his house to flush out the politically correct showboaters.

DISINFORMATION #5/REGULARLY SCHEDULED DE-PROGRAMMING #1 (The Usual via Tim, 8248 Rupert Road South, Millersville, Maryland 21108) A back-to-back zine in the style of the old Ace Doubles; R.S.D. is taking over from the other, which is being shut down. A large part is clippings. For leftwingers and punk rockers; it would be funny if they traded with WHITE TRASH. A poem in R.S.D. has what I thought was a good title "UFOs are real, the Government's a hoax."

TRAP DOOR #14 (\$4 per copy, otherwise The Usual, from Robert Lichtman, Box 30, Glen Ellen, California 95442) An editorial with thoughts about preserving fannish history, which put me in mind of current anguish in philately over preserving postage stamps. (The oldest stamps are more than 150 years old, but the paper was never intended to last; who knew in 1840 that people would collect stamps?) Much of this zine is personal reminiscence, sometimes fannish, sometimes not. New York fandom back when, British Tories right now, California brush fires.

THE WRONG LEGGINGS #1 (Available for trades from Lillian Edwards, 39 Viewforth, Edinburgh EH10 4JE, Scotland) If I understand the editorial correctly, this zine was inspired by a trip to Canada. Here then is the solution to gafiation; just ship them into the Great Lone Land and let our beautiful mountains and forests rejuvenate them. An article on the Glasgow Worldcon that worries about what is Scottish SF. Change the appropriate words and you'll get the sort of article that Canucks run on SF (and the same indignant response from Americans who can't see what the fuss is about). However, I've done my share of sapper work in that minefield, so no more. An article on child support law (she teaches it), and an account about Vancouver fandom that will have them in an uproar if they see a copy of this.

DRIVEL AND DROOL #3 (The Usual from Mike Siddall, 133 Duke Street, Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria LA16 7AE, England) John Berry writes about seducers, there is a rhapsody on rural life, bits on con-running, worries about disease epidemics, and the decline of a close friend. I still don't get the Scottish jokes.

ZX #5 (The Usual from Andrew Murdoch, 2563 Heron Street, Victoria, British Columbia V8R 5Z9) D-Day thoughts on the regular German soldier, a proposal to print an e-mail directory, and letters of comment.

ROGUE RAVEN #46 (The Usual from Frank Denton, 14654 - 8 Avenue SW, Seattle, Washington 98166) Mostly locs in this perzine, but an account of a small con called Potlatch, with one-track programming and lots of people at the panels. I've always felt guilty because I attend a con for the programming, whereas most congoers write of the parties they were at, so it is nice to see others of the same mind. I seem to be getting a lot of zines out of Seattle; there must be something in the water they drink that turns them into either zine pubbers or grunge musicians.

GRADIENT #10 (The Usual from Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828-1023) This ish starts off with an extended roundtable transcription of folk trying to answer "Is SF better or worse than ever?" and then veering off and around the subject. Like a con panel, actually. Sabella rates the Hugo and Nebula winners according to quality. The 1954 Hugo novel THEY'D RATHER BE RIGHT once again lives up to its reputation as a novel that should never have been nominated, let alone win.

RELUCTANT FAMILUS #33 (The Usual from Thomas Sadler, 422 West Maple Avenue, Adrian, Michigan 49221-1627) The loczine issue, as he catches up on all those letter writers who do their part in the deforestation of this world. It bids fair to challenge FOSFAX, although not as nasty and less obsessed with Clinton and the gang.

FOR THE CLERISY #4 (Trade zines only from Brant Kresovich, Riga Business School, Riga Technical University, Skolas 11, LV-1010 Riga, Latvia. If you don't publish your own zine, he'll accept other zines.) An anglophone zine. This issue is a geography lesson about Latvia, most interesting to read. A window into a country the mass media seldom mention over here.

OSFS STATEMENT #206 (The Usual from Ottawa SF Society, c/o A.G. Wagner, 251 Nepean Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 0B7) A clubzine with the usual reviews, locs, and media news. Michael McKenny has begun serializing a history of Ottawa fandom. This installment veers into the Canadian SF Association which was founded in 1948 and lasted a few brief years. A Calgary club, the Western SF Association, "stayed aloof". Chester Cuthbert's name surfaces here. There was quite a bit of shortlived activity in Canada SF then. Much of this history has been lost, but McKenny and Garth Spencer are to be commended for their efforts to preserve at least some of it. One wishes that more SFers in Canada could understand they are part of a long lineage, not sprung from Star Trek.

CO-OP NEWS Aug/Sept 1994. Okay, this isn't a zine by any stretch of the imagination, but I wanted to mention it for a contest in the mag. Calgary Co-op is the largest co-operative in North America, with 300,000 members. It is mostly a supermarket but also has department store operations, service stations, etc. The contest is called "Where In The World?", and the idea is to submit a photograph of the contestant holding a Calgary Co-op plastic shopping bag from somewhere outside Canada. Some photos are the usual touristy stuff from Disneyland or Mexico. The better ones include a photo taken in Hungary with the manager of a village co-op, and several of UN peacekeepers in Bosnia. Since signs are mostly shot away in Bosnia, the soldiers could only pose next to UN vehicles to provide proof of where they were. (Calgary pays more than average attention to what is going on in Bosnia since two of our regiments are serving there.)

WARP #30 (The Usual from Montreal SF & F Association, Box 1186, Place du Parc, Montreal, Québec H2W 2P4). Clubzine of media fans and congoers, very well printed up. Lots of con reports in the "Is congoing dead?" style, movie reviews, Trek fiction and news (sometimes hard to decide which is which), and a doomsday francophone comix with rather nifty skyscrapers.

THE OLAF ALTERNATIVE #7/OUTHOUSE #11 (The Usual from Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midland DY8 1LA, England. He mentions he is unemployed at the present and on a tight budget, so perhaps a banknote or two might be preferred.) This is a back-to-back zine in the Ace Doubles style. OUTHOUSE comprises the locs to the previous issue of OLAF ALTERNATIVE. T.O.A. #7 is a collection of faan fiction, Sherlock Holmes parodies, and cartoons of a certain Viking who seems to turn up everywhere in time and space. Hand-coloured covers.

THE BLEARY EYES #3: NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN. This came with OLAF ALTERNATIVE and is part of a compilation of fan fiction by John Berry, done over the years to date.

WOOF #19 (Probably about US\$3 or perhaps The Usual from Victoria A. Smith, 12627 Harbor Drive, Woodbridge, Virginia 22192) This is an annual apa put together for the WorldCon, #19 being the ConAdian issue out of Winnipeg. A collection of sixteen zines, one-shots, and progress reports. The acronym 'WOOF' stands for 'WorldCon Order Of Faneditors'. An apa is an anthology where each contributor sends in x number of copies of his/her zine. The zines are then collated and each contributor gets back a stapled set of all the zines.

FROZEN FRONTIER #1 (The Usual from S.M. Campbell, 1447 Lincoln Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3E 0Y6) A neozine that was handed out at ConAdian. A lengthy article about strong female characters in SF (or the lack of them) and a list of books to take along to an isolated planet colony, a variation of the Desert Island Discs game.

IDEA #8 (The Usual from Geri Sullivan, 3444 Blaisdell Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408-4315) Mimeo on fuzzy paper, an almost extinct type of repro. An Alice in Wonderland adaptation by Ted White about ConFrancisco, Jeanne Gomoll bids on rugs at auction, and Donald Duck porno. Locs of course.

BUSSWARBLE #17 (The Usual from Michael Hailstone, 14 Bolden Street, Heidelberg, Victoria 3084, Australia) This zine specializes in conspiracy theory. The ish at hand starts off with remarks about politically-correct people who find offense in just about anything, such as the Englishman upset by Johnny Horton's song "Sink the Bismark", because the chap had lost an uncle on the HMS Hood. Good thing the Englishman didn't hear Horton's song "The Battle of New Orleans" which is outright derogatory, about redcoats, whereas "Bismark" is a straightforward story of the battle and does not insult the Royal Navy. The zine goes on a bit about the banking conspiracy, and the rest is locs.

ATTITUDE #2 (The Usual from John Dallman, Flat 4, 27 Terront Road, London N15 3AA, England) Articles on the shutdown of Mexican, the loss of the vision thing, defenses of fantasy and opera, and a three-way discussion of fanzines.

SCOPUS: 3007 #5 (The Usual from Al Bouchard, Box 573, Hazel Park, Michigan 48030-0573) Another zine I picked up at ConAdian. Talk on various cons, a continuing series on costuming, reviews, and locs. An article on the "invisibly limited", those suffering handicaps such as chronic pain or internal cancers. A thinking piece.

COMMUNIQUE #18 (C\$2 for sample copy from SF Canada, 10523 - 100 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0A8) Newszine of SF Canada, a pro writers group. Market news, interviews with writers and Hollywood producers, bilingual. Not a fanzine but anyone hoping to sell professionally in Canada should be looking at this zine.

SUBURBAN KNIGHT #? (The Usual from Emily Dachowitz, 4 Park Avenue, Harrison, New York 10528) A neozine, if I understand it correctly. Bits and pieces on this and that.

THE REASONABLE FREETHINKER #2 (The Usual from Tom Feller, Box 13626, Jackson, Mississippi 39236) Extended movie reviews, not the usual capsule comments that one sees in many zines (including my own) but well researched into the nitpicking details. Also quite a few conreports and locs.

SF MODEL BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER August '94 (\$5 per year from SFMBA, 26076 - 72 Robertson Road, Nepean, Ontario K2H 5Y8) Yet another one from the freebie table at ConAdian. The title says it all.

GALLIFREYAN GAZETTE #110 (Probably The Usual from 105 Wehmeier Street, Columbus, Indiana 47201) Again a ConAdian freebie, this one dealing with Dr. Who, X-Files, and a comics con with GoH Harlan Ellison.

UNDER THE OZONE HOLE #8 (The Usual from Karl Johanson, 4129 Carey Road, Victoria, British Columbia V8Z 4G5) The cover honours the 25th anniversary of the first Moonlanding, excepting that the astronaut bears startling resemblance to the ConAdian Fan Guest of Honour. This cloning business is getting out of hand; there should be a law. Inside text discusses what fans are really like (not the stereotypical geeks of yesteryear), news of CanFandom, an extended review at length of SEVEN SAMURAI/THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, locs, and book and media reviews. An obituary of Richard Nixon which comes to bury him, not to praise him.

ETHEL THE AARDVARK #56 (The Usual from Melbourne SF Club, Box 212, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia) Clubzine with news of local events, reviews, and locs. A conreport from someone who spent seven days driving across to Perth to ConFusion 94. I can't imagine Canuck fans driving to a Vancouver con from Halifax. As Sharon Moseley writes: "You get the chance to see a lot of wildlife too although most of it seems to be dead or attempting to become so by jumping in front of the car. I've never seen so many kamikaze kangaroos in all my life. ... I found myself filming Danny standing beside the 200th roadkill for his trip video.". Elsewhere the editorial agonizes about apathy and the decline of fandom and how zines aren't being published anymore because people can't afford colour covers. My loc in response to that is already in the mail. Neatly following up on this is the first part of a series on how to publish a zine via computer DTP.

GLOBAL MAIL #9 (US\$1 cash or two IRCs from Global Mail, Box 597996, Chicago, Illinois 60659) The cutting edge starts here. This is the reverse of a reviewzine. It contains hundreds of ads in microprint from people around the world soliciting material for their zines, mail art shows, anthologies, and audiovideo compilations. Who can top the invitation to a conference that reads: "When suddenly we rush toward each other, we meet, brush earth,

collide into that other dimension, fracture and slide away, swept into rippling luminous chasms. And we lie in that great quiet, in our soft pungent earth, as mists of steaming pollen, vaporous seed, spread out and rise around us. Write for registration form."

Certainly beats: "Write Convention Chairman at ...". In GLOBAL MAIL, the ads are classified by some of the usual categories such as Anarchist, Books, Penpals, Poetry, or Politics, and by less-common categories such as Boycotts or Actions. The usual boycotts are listed, such as California table grapes, Blockbuster Video stores, and Canada Post. (I should explain to my non-Canadian readers that Canada Post is now largely privatized; you want to buy stamps or mail a registered letter, then you go to a 7-Eleven convenience store or a drugstore.) There is a boycott called against the Grateful Dead.

There are apas of a sort in the mail-art world, where an OE solicits (for example) 60 copies of your postcard. A public access television channel in Hawaii seeks people willing to show and tell how they got their scar. Mr. Barney J. Lynch of Sturtevant, Wisconsin, would like the address of Noraid and other groups involved in Ulster. A good section of zines seeking contributors or trades; if you can't get your rant published elsewhere, try one of these.

Recommended to try at least once if you want to get out of the SF rut.

FILE 770 #104 (US\$8 for five issues from Mike Glycer, #2 - 5828 Woodman Avenue, Van Nuys, California 91401) Fan news ostensibly but mostly con reports, with strong emphasis on WorldCons. This issue is a Westercon report, and a detailed look at why it is so hard to budget for WorldCons, with some surprising conclusions based on a statistical analysis of WorldCon attendances.

WONDERING AND WANDERING #5 (The Usual from Don Fitch, 3908 Frijole, Covina, California 91722) Talk of zine pubbing, a few cons, aboriginal pow-wows, a look at mail art, concerns about FACTSHEET FIVE, and locs. The latter follow up a discussion on freeware and copyright, and etiquette in reprinting from old zines.

MAVERICK #? (The Usual from Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP, England) A special issue for ConAdian. Articles on Don Quixote, the Canterbury Tales, and a combination book review/child care commentary.

STRANGE NEW WORLDS #13 (US\$2.75 from Strange New Worlds, Box 223, Tallevast, Florida 34270) Yet another freebie from ConAdian, this one being a semiprozine devoted to SF toys and modelbuilding. Star Wars toys, Japanese Godzilla toys, Dr. Who rumours, and the controversy over the terms 'Trekkie' and 'Trekker'.

KNARLY KNEWS #47 (The Usual from Henry Welch, 1525 - 16th Avenue, Grafton, Wisconsin 53024-2017) Henry handed this to me at ConAdian. It was a pleasure to meet him, Letha, and their two little ones. Kyle was nine days old, and I leave it to palaeofans to tell me if he was the youngest to attend a WorldCon. Getting back to the zine, there is a trip report on China, book reviews, and locs.

WESTWIND #192 (US\$20 per year from Northwest SF Society, Box 24207, Seattle, Washington 98124) Special ConAdian issue of a clubzine. Usual news and activities, interviews, con stuff, and an account of the Artemis Project. The project is a commercial venture to establish a lunar base. I rather doubt some of their financial projections such as \$800 million in movie ticket sales.

GALACTO-CELTIC NEWSFLASH #11 (The Usual from Franz Miklis, A-5151 Nussdorf 64, Austria. In English) Enthusiastic sixty pages of European fandom, a particular emphasis on SF art. A trip report on Italy, art on monsters in love, lots of locs, and various reviews.

ANGRY THOREAUAN #10 (US\$3 from Randall Tin-ear, Box 2246, Anaheim, California 92814) A musiczine with zine reviews and miscellany such as detoured cartoons and a true story about vandals who tried to burn down their school using Molotov cocktails. Unfortunately they must have been a product of too much inbreeding as they made the Molotovs out of beer cans. Tin-ear went to Zinefest 94 to display his wares, being delayed by having chosen the same freeway and time of day as O.J. Simpson and his famous white vehicle. However, Tin-ear managed to work his way around the traffic jams and arrived not too late. Various band reports and stuff. Some feuding as well, although I'd rather see Tin-ear just ignore the button-pushers and concentrate on what he does best, reporting on the alternative world and life in his part of the planet. Why waste ink on nobodies? I always enjoy reading this zine; recommended.

OMEGA BLOCK #1 (\$2 from David Annandale, #105, 10645 - 80 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1V6) A rantzine but first detouring by a review of dart guns, the plonker toys with suction-cup darts. Then the ranting starts, first against New Age sewage. Next is tips on what to do when the Rapture comes. The theme of this zine is, I neglected to mention, "I Love The Eschaton". As we approach 2000 (or 2001, depending on when you think the millenium is) the nutcases are increasingly evident. In this zine is some nonsense downloaded from the Internet as part of what Annandale calls Conspiracy Sifting 101. A long text on Russia's operational SDI of 1977, with which they fought a war with the Bolshevik-controlled USA government. (Does FOSFAX know about this?) There is a summary of a plan to eliminate American ghettos by moving the poor to the suburbs; gentrification is just a conspiracy. (Does BUSSWARBLE know about this?) And finally, a brief summary about the secret cabal known as The Fifth. But I advise the editor to cheer up. It is better that the lunatic fringe busy themselves with nonsense than to take an effective part in politics or some other aspect of life where they might do real harm.

THINGUMYBOB #12 (The Usual from Chuck Connor, c/o Sildan House, Chediston Road, Wissett near Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 0NF, England) Zine reviews and weird stuff out of the local newspaper are only the basic starting points to lead onto DIY plans for topologically impossible objects, a defense of the law by a solicitor, why you should not eat pigs in Goa, and Connor's mailing list in alphabetical order of first name.

DEJA VU #21 (The Usual from Robert Runté, 53 Mohawk Road West, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 5J5) An apazine special issue for ConAdian, which seems decent enough of him to put out, considering that he was Fan GoH at ConAdian. A summary of his life which is fannish legend in Canada but perhaps not that well known to outlanders as it should be. Such as being a student at the University of Alberta for 22 years before they finally managed to get rid of him. Clutching his newly-minted PhD in hand, Robert then made an epochal journey to Lethbridge to take up a professorship at the university there. Lethbridge is roughly half way between Calgary and the USA border in the midst of shortgrass prairie, irrigation farms, and constant hurricane-force winds. Not content with buying a house, Robert has bought into a publishing house, taking a part interest in Tesseract. He then co-edited his first book, for a course no longer being taught by the time the book appeared.

MARKTIME #30 (The Usual from Mark Strickert, ELCA Copy Centre, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631) A perzine, with lots of baseball stuff (this was when the game was still played) and conreporting. He also collects radio station tapes, and travels with an idea of touching as many counties as possible and riding on transit systems of the cities he visits.

CIDER ON TAP #1 (The Usual from Mark R. Harris, 44 Howard Avenue, Passaic, New Jersey 07055) A letter substitute to REDISCOVERIES, in limbo due to unemployment problems.

CYBRER BUNNY #2 (The Usual from Tara and Robert Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP, England) A fiction-zine; I picked it up at ConAdian and not until much later noticed the title was CYBRER, not CYBER. It starts off with a hardboiled detective parody featuring Jackson Spilane Rabbits (lovely artwork). Then a bit on solar eclipses, and cats touring Iona. An animalzine, if one must classify.

HISSY FIT #1 (\$3 from Margot Dame Publications, Box 113, 545 East Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia V5T 1X4) Subtitled "A Feminist, Science-Fiction Fanzine", and was distributed at ConAdian. The theme for this issue is on reproductive technology gone mad. Not just something to idly chat about against the day it will arrive, for it has already arrived. Sex selection of fetuses, with the females being aborted because the happy couple want a boy. An account of the disastrous effects of in-vitro fertilization, and the ethical difficulties of surrogate motherhood. The editorial is a bit over-reacting and suggests it is all a conspiracy by men to eliminate the need for women. I believe it was Asimov who pointed out that as the proportion of females declines from sex selection, there will be an opposite trend back to females, as they become scarcer. Parents who selected boys will be horrified to realize that they selected a generation of homosexuals who had no females to court.

TAPA #168 (Membership details from Howard Scrimgeour, 302 College Avenue, Unit 20, Guelph, Ontario N1G 4T6) I picked up a batch of issues of this monthly apa at ConAdian; much good reading. TAPA is looking for new members, so if you are thinking about an apa, drop them a line. Everything from conreports to World Cup soccer to driving the speed limit on highways.

VISIONS OF PARADISE #57 (The Usual from Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828-1023) Diaryzine of a schoolteacher, life in the family.

ON SPEC #18 (C\$6 in Canada, US\$6 elsewhere for single copy, from On Spec, Box 4727, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 5G6) This is Canada's prozine, and features a distinctive type of speculative fiction. This issue also includes a history of ON SPEC, which began in 1989 after a group of frustrated writers got tired of collecting rejection slips from American and British editors. The first issue sold out in three weeks, and ON SPEC has since gone from strength to strength. The writers' collective that started a magazine for their work has also given a boost to Canuck SF in general.

SLUBBERDEGULLION #8 (The Usual from Nigel Richardson, 35 Cricketers Way, Kirkstall Lane, Headingley, Leeds LS5 3RJ England) A perzine not to be read if you are depressed or even if you are happy, as it will soon bring you down with Nigel's constant complaints about his job and life. Perhaps if he were a bit more cheerful, he might get laid more often (another constant lament in the zine). We all have our depressing moments in life, but the trick is to either look at them from a humorous point of view, or else ignore them completely. I get fed up in my job with Parks Dept. management and illiterate workers, but you won't see too much of that in .5 OPUNTIAs, when there are happier things to remember. One way of getting through life is to look for the funny side of things instead of fuming. A protest march by students that leaves one in a traffic jam can be a source of complaint or it can be a look at how high school kids managed to make the Premier apoplectic because he had to cancel his fishing trip.

BARDIC RUNES #9 (\$4 from Michael McKenny, 424 Cambridge Street South, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4H5) This fictionzine specializes in sword and sorcery stories. Best story in this ish is one by D. Sandy Nielsen in which viking berserkers find out the hard way that the Inuit they attack are even better berserkers. (Hint: the polar bear is bigger and stronger than European bears.) Also a story by Ukrainian author Anna Lee Kitaeva.

OBSESSIONS #1 to #3 (The Usual from Bridget Hardcastle, 13 Lindfield Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 6PX, England) Each issue deals with some form of obsession, such as chocolate or beer. One article on book collecting is subtitled "The One Who Dies With The Most Books Wins".

FOSFAX #171 (The Usual from FOSFA, Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281) 66 pages of microprint, much of it on American politics but many sizeable book reviews. Not recommended for Clinton supporters with blood pressure problems. But they do fit in a fair bit of SF, and the famous (or infamous) locs where everyone keeps shouting "I never said that!" or "Did too! Did too!".

ASH #3 (\$2.50 from Ash, Box 1391, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 5C8) A small-press literary zine, mostly poetry, but in this issue with an essay by John Hatch entitled "The Day The Universe Changed, So Did Art", about the effect of science on art. As the mechanistic view of the universe failed, and science adopted relativity and quantum mechanics, so did artists leave mimetic representation of nature and go to abstract art. Today abstract art is the last refuge of incompetent artists who cannot draw, but the earliest abstract artist (in 1912) was a serious student of science trying to visualize modern physics on canvas. Hatch provides an informative history of art in the early part of this century as it coped with the new indeterministic view of the universe.

OBSCURE PUBLICATIONS #28 (US\$2 from Jim Romenesko, Box 1334, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201) A reviewzine that has a few detailed reviews rather than a mass of capsule reviews. In this issue, the themes are serial-killer zines and the discovery of zines by academics and mass-media. There is a saying that when TIME magazine discovers a trend, it is already dying, which has me worried about the future of zines if that is true.

ROSSUM AND THE ECONOMY OF ABUNDANCE

The play R.U.R., by Karel Capek (pronounced chop-ek), has no need of introduction to most literary SFers, who, even if they haven't read it, are at least aware that this is wherefrom the word 'robot' was introduced into the English language. The play, like many classics, is more admired than read, but it is still frequently reprinted. It is the story of a robot factory, rebellion of the robots, and the final destruction of both robots and all humans. The economic effects of robots are discussed in the play, but serious consideration is forgotten when the plot veers off permanently into another direction, distracted by the master/servant rebellion that comprises the major part of the play.

R.U.R. premiered in Prague on January 25, 1921, and was a success immediately, there and in London and New York. It provided the word 'robot' from the Czechoslovakian 'robota', meaning forced labour, involuntary servitude, or drudgery. It did not refer to mechanical men; they were organic beings. The initials of the play stand for Rossum's Universal Robots. Rossum the elder invented a new type of tissue, organic tissue with a different metabolism. Rossum the younger, the nephew, converted the idea into efficient, factory-produced beings, used as cheap labour around the world and as cannon-fodder for armies.

Act One sets the stage, being mostly explanatory passages aimed at educating the audience about robots. There are extended "As you know ..." lectures, as Domain, General Manager for R.U.R., talks to Helena Glory, who has come to inspect the factory. She is of the Humanity League, a do-gooder organization determined to help robots, whether they want it or not. But she is soon baffled and put in her place. She thinks Domain's secretary is a human and is shocked to find out she is a robot. And when Domain invites in a group of engineers to talk with her, she mistakes them for robots, to be equally shocked when she

discovers they are humans.

Act Two skips directly to the rebellion of the robots. Helena has married Domain, it is five years later, and the humans have only just discovered the Revolution is begun. The important part of this act is that Helena burns the only copy of the formula to manufacture robots, doing it on impulse.

Act Three is the siege of the R.U.R. offices, the last holdout of humanity. But they are all destroyed save one, an engineer called Alquist, who is spared because the head robot saw him work with his hands. Alquist is needed to help make more robots, they not having the secret.

But in Act Four, it transpires that Alquist doesn't have the secret either. He is the last man on Earth. The robots are horrified, for they are organic beings who die of old age within twenty years. They cannot procreate as do humans, Alquist cannot procreate since all women are gone, and both sides face the horror of extinction.

The usual critical reviews of this play discuss the robot versus man, servant versus master idea. But here I propose to consider only the economic effects of the robots. Capek did devote some time to this, but then swerved away into the Frankenstein mythology and did not return to the matter. He was aware of it though. In Act One, Helena is informed by Berman, Managing Director of R.U.R. as follows. (I am using the translation of P. Selver, a 1973 paperback by Pocket Books, ISBN 671-46605-4)

Berman: "All prices are today a third of what they were, and they'll fall still lower, lower, lower..."

Helena: "I don't understand."

[continued next page]

Berman: "Why, bless me, Miss Glory, it means that the cost of labour has fallen. A Robot, food and all, costs three and fourpence per hour. All factories will go pop like acorns if they don't at once buy robots to lower the cost of production."

Helena: "Yes, and they'll get rid of their workmen."

Berman: "Ha, ha, of course. But, good gracious me, in the meantime we've dumped five hundred thousand tropical robots down on the Argentine pampas to grow corn. ... Why in five years we'll be up to our ears in corn and everything else."

Alquist: "Yes, and all the workers throughout the world will be unemployed."

Domain: "They will, Alquist. They will, Miss Glory. But in ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much corn, so much cloth, so much everything, that things will be practically without price. Everyone will take as much as he wants. There'll be no poverty. Yes, there'll be unemployed. But, then, there won't be any employment. Everything will be done by living machines. The robots will clothe and feed us. The robots will make bricks and build houses for us. The robots will keep our accounts and sweep our stairs. There'll be no employment, but everyone will be free from worry, and liberated from the degradation of labour. Everybody will live only to perfect himself."

In Act Three, as the end times near, there is this debate:

Domain: "Alquist, this is our last hour. We are already speaking half in the other world. Alquist, it was not an evil dream, to shatter the servitude of labour. Of the dreadful and humiliating labour that man had to undergo. The unclean and murderous drudgery. Oh Alquist, work was too hard. Life was too hard. And to overcome that ...".

Alquist: "That was not what the two Rossums dreamed of. Old Rossum only thought of his godless tricks and the young one of his millions. And that's not what your R.U.R. shareholders dream of, either. They dream of dividends. And their dividends are the ruin of mankind."

Domain: "Oh to hell with their dividends. Do you suppose I'd have done an hour's work for them? It was for myself that I worked, do you hear? For my own satisfaction. I wanted man to become the master. So that he shouldn't live merely for a crust of bread. I wanted not a single soul to be broken in by other people's machinery. I wanted nothing, nothing, nothing to be left of this confounded social lumber. ... I wanted to turn the whole of mankind into the aristocracy of the world. An aristocracy nourished by millions of mechanical slaves. Unrestricted, free, and perfect men. ..."

The sticking point of the Economy of Abundance is in trying to make the transition to it from our present situation. Lots of authors write about the utopia but no one has come up with a plan that will shift us over to a world where no one will work unless they want to, and still ensure that people are available to unplug sewer lines. Many will volunteer to be airline pilots or opt for the simple joys of country life raising crops, but I can't see many volunteering to reshingle roofs. In the absence of robots from the R.U.R. corporation, we would have to rely on some form of National Service. Not just a two-year tour of duty as with many armed forces today, but a lifelong commitment to prune trees a fortnight each year to age 65. Unpopular jobs would have a reduced term of National Service and easy jobs might have a quota. There would not be the leisured democracy one might hope for.

THE PRICELESS ECONOMIC SYSTEM

From R.U.R. we segue to a zine called LITTLE FREE PRESS, issue #110 (\$1 from Ernest Mann, 714 SE 3rd Street, Little Falls, Minnesota 56345). A Socratic dialogue in this ish between Ernest and Stan about how life would be in a world without money. Ernest Mann refers to this as the Priceless Economic System, but I prefer the term Economy of Abundance. The problem with today's economic system is not prices, but rather maldistribution of overproduction, including the unemployed (who are simply surplus workers, overproduced by an excessively fertile species).

As I was harping on in the R.U.R. review, the problem is not in the utopia but in the getting there; how do we make the transition? One small step is already being done in the use of discretionary income and time to volunteer for non-profit activities such as zinepublishing or charity social work. But this is only the disposal of surplus money or time, not a full shift to utopia. Mann writes: "I gave my work (my newsletter) free of charge for over twenty years. I had the freedom to write when, where, why, how, and what I believed to be true. I gave it to whoever I chose. I didn't have to write to please an editor, publisher, or my readers. I had the ultimate freedom to make my work into fun. I have more freedom in my work, so I am enjoying part of the PES [Priceless Economic System]."

Barring the last sentence, this is as about as perfect of a description why people publish zines as one could hope to find. It is the reason why I publish and why most of you zinepubbers out there do it. It is an outlet for the ideas and writing that do not fit the paying markets. It is, however, ultimately dependent on discretionary income left over after the bills are paid. This is not part of the PES; the paper, ink, and postage must be paid for. An unemployed (surplus) worker does not publish for long in the absence of money.

Mann goes on to talk about the unemployed/unemployable, a

group of people who might be considered as parasites in a PES where everything is free. But, as he points, out, that would be no change from today's system, where we hide surplus workers under unemployment insurance, welfare, council housing, and such. In Canada, before the federal Tories were obliterated in the last federal election, some backbenchers were suggesting abolishing the entire system of UIC, welfare, subsidies, and tax credits in favour of a guaranteed annual income for everyone. It would be set at just above the poverty line, so that if you were satisfied to live inexpensively then you didn't have to work. If you wanted an executive-style house, a fine German car, and winter vacations in Mexico, then you would still have to work. As the Tory pointed out, the question is not whether we should pay people to do nothing, for that was decided decades ago when the old-age pension and UIC were introduced. Rather the question is to decide to keep our present mess of scattershot GAI systems, with their attendant bureaucracies, or rationalize it and do away with a huge mass of civil servants.

This might be one way to gradually shift towards a PES. Mann mentions that tens of millions do volunteer work. A society of GAI workers would by and large start doing what interested them, not whatever they could find for a job. But I doubt many, if any, would reshingle roofs as a hobby. Lots of them would grow gardens, pick litter in parks, or publish zines, but don't count on anyone to help you unplug your sewer drain at 03h00.

The question is asked in LITTLE FREE PRESS #110: "By what motivation will our production get done if we eliminate money?" To which Mann replies as follows.

"People will be motivated to work in the PES by several things. The reward of a nearly Utopian society will be enough motivation for many. The freedom to use expensive tools and machines to build things people want will motivate many, especially because they will have the freedom at work to use their creativity to make their job easier and more fun. Some will work for the comradeship

[continued next page]

they will experience. Some for the satisfaction of producing a superior product that people want. And probably for several other reasons."

Mann goes on to suggest that PES will eliminate the need to steal, since everything is free. But I suspect that collectibles and one-of-a-kinds will still be stolen. PES addresses mass-produced items that can be easily obtained but who will own the 1¢ British Guiana magenta stamp, of which only one specimen is known? This is where the Economy of Abundance comes into play, and why the problem is not the wage system, it is in finding something to do with surplus goods or labour. Surplus goods are traditionally destroyed by marketing boards or wars, and surplus labour warehoused on UIC. In a PES or EoA, surplus labour does not exist, and surplus goods are given away. But who gets the 1¢ magenta? Right now that is decided by money. Whoever has \$1,000,000+ gets the 1¢ magenta.

Writes Mann: "Border patrols will no longer be necessary. People will be allowed unlimited travel and be welcomed to work in any country." Tell that to the Bosnians. This statement assumes that international migrations are motivated strictly by economics. But no homogenous group of people will accept a sudden flood of people from another ethnic group. Nevermind the lectures about how we are all the same under the skin; tribalism will not disappear in the PES anymore than it did in a Soviet Union. Since resources are not evenly distributed across the planet, those in poor countries cannot enjoy the luxury of only volunteering if they feel like it under PES.

"In the PES where even land will be free, the starving people can take a piece of land that is not actually being used." True enough, as long as human population can be kept under control (PES volunteers will distribute the Pill) and as long as underpopulated countries don't mind being flooded by Third World refugees looking for their share of the land. Imagine the flood of Haitians into southern USA and Québec, or hordes of Patels streaming out

of India into western Canada or Britain. Imagine how the German government will react to Turkish migrants taking advantage of the PES. And don't give me any fairy tales about laws to control discrimination or educating the masses that racism is sinful. That sort of thing only just barely keeps matters under control now, when immigration is measured in tens of thousands. When millions flood across the border, what will happen?

Mann mentions that many present-day jobs are useless and would disappear in the PES. Who needs banks and stock brokers in the absence of money? A statistic is quoted that says 90% of existing jobs are not producing life-supportive wealth. One reason our global economy has so much trouble today is that even those 90% of jobs are becoming surplus. In a money system, we have to find other work for those workers. It is a problem that has been dealt with before. My greatgrandparents supported eleven children on their farm, but they needed them to help in the work. But as the farm became mechanized, it was no longer necessary to have all that labour. Two of the eleven stayed on the farm and outproduced the previous generation. The rest found themselves in factories. Now factories don't need them either, so they must find another form of work, mostly in the services industry. Many SF stories have carried this to a logical conclusion; we end up as artists or bored when all the work is automated or unnecessary.

We are an automated society today, yet leisure is less than it was. But it is not the money system entirely at fault. Double-income families want better houses and fancier cars. (Yes, there are poor folk struggling, but the statistics show most double-income families could live cheaper if they but would.) One way to escape to a PES is to ask one's self if you really need an executive house and a fine German car. Mann writes: "Producers would fill the demand instead of attempting to create a demand." Double-incomers many times struggle because they are responding to a created demand, not a real need.

BUGS IN SPACE

Review of THE VOLKSWARRIOR GUIDEBOOK (US\$10.95 via Atomic Possum Enterprises, Box 3064, Florissant, Missouri 63032)

I saw the ad for this book at ConAdian, and as we have a long tradition of Volkswagen Beetles in our family, sent off for it. My father drove Beetles in the 1960s-70s. I drove one in the 1970s-80s, and my brother Neil still has both a Beetle and a van. In fact, I bought this book as a Christmas gift for Neil, but took the liberty of reading and reviewing it first.

The book starts off with a prologue about the Treflengie Empire, which once controlled 97% of the galaxy before it went bankrupt. (When the cost of its starships exceeded the cost of the civilizations the Empire conquered, the final accounting was not long in coming.) Others tried to take up the position of the Treflengie in the years of chaos that followed but ultimately failed. Success was finally achieved by a planet of accountants, subsequently known as the Volkswarriors. Using ancient designs of a transport module that seated two (the Beetle), they added a warp drive sticking out the back end and thus created a simple, easy-to-maintain, and inexpensive fighter. Using a van provided the convenience of a place in the back to sleep in. Armament included cheap Planetcracker missiles built of off-the-shelf components, such as circuitry from Mr. Binky Bear toys.

The Volkswarriors were not unopposed in their sweep to become the next galactic empire. There were the extremely annoying United Federation of Nice Guys, the planet of clones who called themselves The Bob (the Volkswarriors finally got rid of them by bringing in Bob's Mom), and a competing empire of Starfrogs. After the defeat of the latter, the Volkswarriors were unopposed, and were able to implement their final solution: merchandising. Entire planets were converted into plastic to make Volkswarrior

official lunchboxes. There was the Volkswarrior movie and the numerous sequels. And copyright violators would soon meet up with the Volkswarrior Legal Commandos, who spoke softly and carried a briefcase of contracts and nuclear weapons.

Your guide to galactic conquest on a budget.

MORE ZINE REVIEWS

I suppose if I had a computer I could push a button and re-arrange the capsule reviews to put them together in alphabetical order. But here are a few more reviews in the usual random order as typed up the old-fashioned way.

FROZEN FROG #10 (The Usual via Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, Cap-Rouge, Québec G1Y 1Y9) A genial zine, mostly letters of comment. An account of Antarctica in '99, a ConAdian bid party, readers explain how they manage their fanzine collections (mostly in stacks) and the World Wide Party (keep an eye on that one; next year it should be better than ever). Girard continues his account of comic books in Québec. The bulk of this ish is locs.

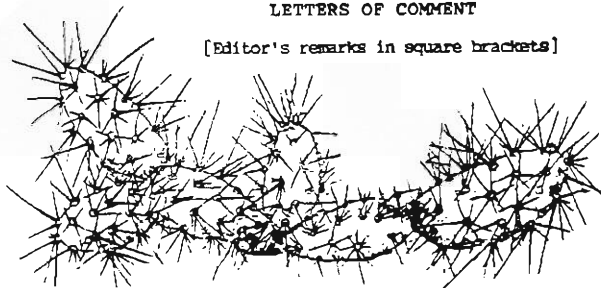
IT GOES ON THE SHELF #13 (The Usual from Ned Brooks, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, Virginia 23605) A reviewzine that concentrates on older books, the weird tracts and material that deserves a second mention.

SERCON POPCULT LITCRIT FANMAG #4 (The Usual from Garth Spencer, Box 15335, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 5B1) News notes and locs, with a general theme on fandom.

THE ZERO-G LAVATORY #1 (The Usual from Scott Patri, Box 1196, Cumberland, British Columbia V0R 1S0) Always nice to see a new zine. This ish has talk of how Patri got into fandom, fanfiction, and advice for the nervous neo.

LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



FROM: Henry Welch 1994-7-9
 1525 - 16 Avenue
 Grafton, Wisconsin 53024-2017

I suspect that the USA and Britain like each other's sitcoms so well because only the best are exported and the humour is fresher. All-in-all they are probably all bad in the average.

FROM: Harry Warner Jr. 1994-7-4
 423 Summit Avenue
 Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Buck Coulson is wrong when he thinks that the "personal zine was a late development in SF fandom". Perzines thrived in FAPA during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Some members, like Elmer Perdue, Milton A. Rothman, and Jack Speer were quite candid about their lives, thoughts, and problems. During WW2, J. Michael Rosenblum published FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST in England, and most issues were accompanied by 'riders', publications by other British fans that were mostly perzines. The name hadn't been invented yet, but the precedent had been firmly established.

FROM: Murray Moore 1994-7-6
 377 Manly Street
 Midland, Ontario L4R 3E2

You could save me writing to the City of Flin Flon to learn the story of how it is the only city to be named after an SF character.

[Quoting from John Colombo's OTHER CANADAS about how Flin Flon was named after an SF novel: "The hero is Professor Josiah Flintabaty Flontin, who appears in a dime novel called THE SUNLESS CITY (1905), written by J.E. Preston-Muddock, a British writer of pulp fiction who also used the name Dick Donovan. The town of Flin Flon, in Manitoba, was given the nickname of the Professor, when a tattered copy of the book, now in the Flin Flon Public Library, was found by a prospector on the site of the future town in 1913. In THE SUNLESS CITY, the genial professor visits a 'sunless city' which is rich in gold, ruled by women, and located at the centre of the earth. Since Flin Flon has extensive gold deposits, the name seemed to fit. In 1962, the city fathers erected a fibreglass figure of the professor ...".

One thing that has always baffled me is what a copy of that novel was doing out there. Flin Flon is on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border about halfway up the province, and is just inside the limit of permafrost.]

FROM: Robert Sabella 1994-7-24
 24 Cedar Manor Court
 Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828-1023

You mentioned how Canadian media give the impression that anybody who walks the streets of USA cities is immediately mugged or worse. That image is not restricted to Canadians. Our own media give the same impression, so that many nonurbanites in this country are equally fearful of

the mean streets of the cities. Of course when you look at the crime statistics objectively, the facts are not nearly as fearful as the image.

FROM: John Thiel
30 North 19th Street
Lafayette, Indiana 47904

You have an extraordinarily high tolerance for the impingement of other forms of fan activity into SF fandom, but I believe you've explained this; you might like those other hobbies just as well. I myself like it better if the one hobby is kept to the one publication, and the other hobby to the other publication.

[I think SF could stand a bit of cross-fertilization to keep it from stagnating. I don't see any harm in review-non-SF zines. After all, SF cons are unashamed to have Regency dancing on their programs. One BOF with whom I am familiar laments the non-SFish influences while at the same time talking about the great marathon poker games at the cons he attends. The computer room at our local con has WW2 games. I like many non-SF zines because they are at the cutting edge of the future, while SF is a quiet backwater.]

FROM: Chester Cuthbert
Winnipeg
1994-7-1

BARDIC RUNES #8 sent me by Michael McKenny in exchange for a copy of the CANADIAN FAN DIRECTORY confirms the belief that there are multitudes of fanzines being published. A story by Dennis Valdron in B.R. #8 was my first knowledge of his existence in Winnipeg as a fantasy writer. He expects to visit me tomorrow, publishes a fanzine, has had many stories published, yet was as unknown to me as I was to him. I know that there are apas whose members are unknown to most fanzine publishers. And most academics are in a strange world of their own.

I am receiving more fanzines than I can adequately acknowledge, so am not seeking additions to my mail.

FROM: Joseph Major
4701 Taylor Boulevard #8
Louisville, Kentucky 40215-2343
1994-7-5

Conspiracy theories such as in BUSSWARBLE serve a religious need. People who know that all religions are just power trips flanged up by the authority figures gain comfort and fulfillment by actually knowing that every sparrow that falls does so as a result of the all-encompassing Plan drawn up by MJ-12, and revel in possessing the esoteric knowledge vouchsafed only to a select few. Such common-sense objections as you post show only that you are a dupe.

FROM: Joseph Nicholas
15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham
London N15 4JU, England
1994-7-28

You say in your review of BUSSWARBLE that it contains 'feuding with Joseph Nicholas'. I daresay that Michael Hailstone may consider himself to be feuding with me because of the scorn I've poured on his conspiracy theories but I certainly don't consider that I'm feuding with him, because I think his theories are just too stupid to be worth arguing over. Previous issues included a long rant against doctors for warning people off exposure to the sun. A result of Hailstone's appearance in [my zine] FTT #15's "Loonywatch" column is that those who appeared in our letter column have been sent copies of BUSSWARBLE, presumably so they can judge the issues for themselves.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Brant Kresovich, Marshall Cook, Buck Coulson, Harry Andruschak