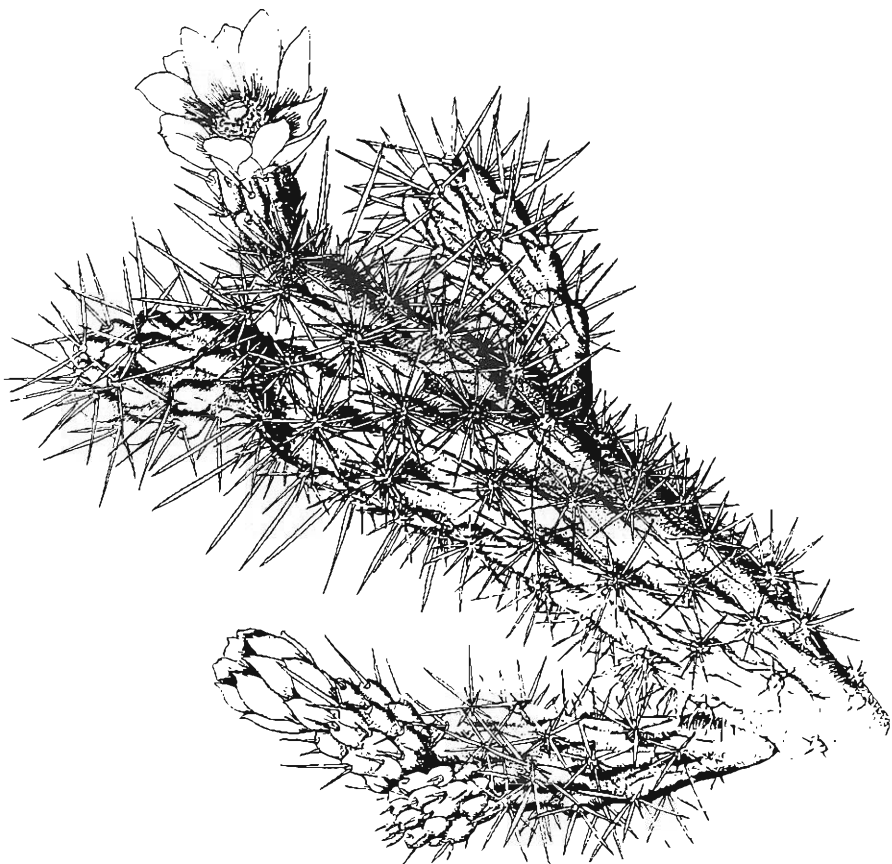


OPUNTIA

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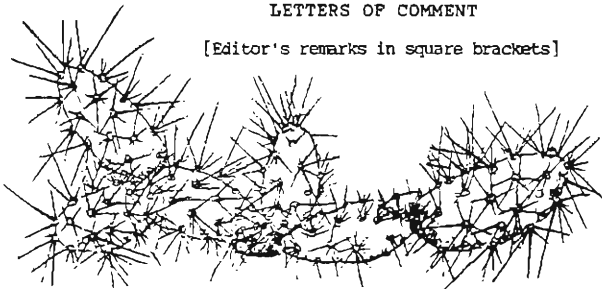
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COVER ART: Opuntia rosea by Rita Weber, from the 1993 book PLANT INVADERS, published by the Dept. of Nature and Environmental Conservation, Cape Town, South Africa

LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



FROM: Joseph Major 1995-9-21
3307H River Chase Court
Louisville, Kentucky 40218-1832

A few years ago I read a letter from 4E Ackerman discussing several other fan collections which had been promised to him but had been destroyed or broken up on the deaths of their owners. His own collection seems to lurch from broken promise to failed initiative. Will

anyone care, or will the hot new trend of collecting POG tie-ins become more important and require throwing out this bunch of sci-fi trash? Our fate may be mere oblivion. Already the consensus of ill-informed opinion is that the zine scene began in the 1970s and is primarily about the editor's self. Or about the editor's crank political theory. Blame it on Seth Friedman.

FROM: John Mansfield 1995-9-12
321 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B9

Some 4800 people attended the 53rd WorldCon in Glasgow. Rather than generally talk about the con and try to compare apples and oranges, I will try to pass on some personal thoughts on how Canadians took part in the WorldCon.

In the Programme book, Lloyd Penney had a small article on Canadian fandom. His 1994 highlights were only Canadian and Convention. We had hoped that he would have said more about Eastern and Western Canada, our writers and publications. The dealers room was about the same size as the previous WorldCon, with about an almost even split between USA and European dealers. It was very good to see a Canadian table; ON SPEC had two tables supporting their zine/writers. This may have been a rare sighting of a Canadian dealer at a foreign convention. The art show had a nice sprinkling of Canadian artists, thanks to a fan who brought over a selection with him and went to the time and trouble of hanging them. Another artist from Halifax had a very nice selection.

[continued next page]

A programme item on SF in Canada was held in Hall 3, a terrible area that really ended with duelling microphones, as each 'room' in the hall could easily be heard in all the others. The rooms were created by setting up 8' high partition walls with no sound baffling. An interesting cross-section of Canadian writers were present, including some living in Canada, the UK, USA, and, from the audience, a Canadian writing SF in Australia. The talk was very enlightening and answered many questions as to the past of speculative writing in Canada, where it is now, and what may be its future. It also raised many questions that there was no time to pursue.

Some interesting ones were: Define Canadian SF and writers. Is it SF written by Canadians born and bred, like Candace Jane Dorsey? ... SF written by Americans now living in Canada, like William Gibson? ... SF written by Canadians living outside Canada like Geoff Ryman? Why don't we ever see rivets (space opera) in ON SPEC? If it isn't there, does that mean ON SPEC does or does not reflect the current Canadian SF scene? Since cyberpunk was created by a Canadian, William Gibson, does that make cyberpunk a Canadian contribution to the genre? It will always be easier for the USA, publishing 10,000 copies of a book, to send 1,000 to Canada, than for Canada to send 10,000 south. Thus, what is the fate of our culture?

A disappointment was that the WorldCon decided to put many Canadian SF writers' kaffeeklatches at the same time. Thus I don't believe attendance was what it could have been. As it was, I was not surprised by the number of fans who attended various Canadian writers.

Program items and auctions on Fan Funds did not support CUFF, as CUFF is aimed internally, while TAFF and DUFF are international in scope. However, we do seem to have some mutual problems.

Canadian threw its thank-you party on the last night along with L.A., San Antonio, and new kid on the block Baltimore. We managed to get lots of Canadian-brand beers (brewed in the UK) as a sort of Canadian flavour to the party. There were lots of people and we were well received. We actually won the award for best party. A fitting end for the last public act of the 52nd WorldCon. ON SPEC also threw a party on the last night. As it was the same night but in another hotel than the Canadian party, I am sorry that I could not drop by. It's a pity we could not have either combined them or had them on alternate nights.

1995-9-13

In the USA, the World Fantasy Con is a very Pro-oriented con. It has its own awards, limits itself to 750 people, has no dance/masque, the dealer room is all books, and the Art Show mostly covers. In Canada, this need has been and will be fed by Can*Con. However, a major problem is that Can*Con does not have the financial resources that World Fantasy has. Although, I believe, that it will have its own set of awards when the SF Foundation does what its mandate has told it to do. How long they will have Can*Con is a matter of conjecture. Edmonton tried with ConText, and it lost \$\$, with only two being held. Unless Canada Council grant money or something becomes available we shall see how Can*Con does. Even now it is beating the drums in Ottawa to pay its past debt and to get \$\$ for 1996. Now some fans do like attending this type of con. There are author entourages, wanna-be writers, friends of, and many others who will be quite happy to join and take part. So 'fans' will attend. Can*Con continues to beat its drum amongst the media/gaming fans of Ottawa while aiming itself at the pros. Also, it has picked a weekend with three other cons being held in Canada. If Canlit is trying to raise the profile of its writers, why make them choose between Can*Con and chances to be guests at other cons?

Can*Con will be in May and ConVersion/Canvention in July, hence writers who are nominated for the Auroras and who have the time/money will be in Calgary. They know what ConVersion is and while attempting to influence programming to some degree, will do with whatever other programming the con comes up with. ConVersion will not have anything to worry about as to the Canlit crowd.

As to your comments on the conrunning panel, Vancouver can host a WorldCon too, as it has several hotels clustered close enough in its downtown core.

FROM: Michael McKenny 1995-9-13
424 Cambridge Street South
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4H5

It was very interesting to read that Calgary has no convention space, when the media here was full of the recent decision to let Calgary and not Ottawa try to host the 2005 World's Fair. Does that mean that after that date you'll have the accomodation?

[Might well be. If Calgary gets the Fair, there will be major redevelopment of the east end of the downtown core. Current talk is that after the Fair, all the buildings would be converted to housing, but one never knows how the plans will change. After all, the Calgary Olympics downhill skiing was held at a different mountain than originally promised.]

Your spoof chain letter would probably move around Canada because it's so funny here and there are those who'd want to share it.

FROM: Buck Coulson 1995-9-16
2677W-500N
Hartford City, Indiana 47348

Interesting comments on Can*Con/Canvention. I'm not sure there is "more of a connection between American pros and fans" than in Canada. There used to be; most of the old pros had been fans at one time and could respond to a fan-nish atmosphere. Some of the younger ones can and some can't. There will be pros at fan parties at the midwestern cons Juanita and I go to, but quite often they're the same ones. Some do their assigned panels and autographing and then disappear. Some of them are getting elderly and aren't able to mingle all that much due to health reasons.

FROM: Lloyd Penney 1995-9-21
412 - 4 Lisa Street
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6

A few fanzines still come in done up on ditto and twilight paper. While that was the traditional method of zine repro Back When, I often found that some of the early dittozines had little to say. This happens when the repro method appears to be more important than the content of the zine itself, and I've never believed that.

HELD OVER FOR OPUNTIA #27: I ran out of room for the rest of Lloyd Penney's letter, also one from Susan Zuege.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Teddy Harvia, Chester Cuthbert, Frank Denton, Ned Brooks

Garth Spencer

Disclaimer: The following article represents only a compilation of materials available to the author. The author neither infers nor implies that this is the Final Word on the subject. Readers are welcome, in fact requested, to poke holes in it and supply corrections and amplifications, as with any fanhistory article that appears in Opuntia. Inferences and conclusions in this article represent the opinions of the author and should not be attributed to this publication or its editor. -G.S.

Every so often, it seems to me, somebody tries to start or restart a national fan activity in Canada. Mostly this enterprise has taken the form of a national fan newszine, sort of *File 770 à la Canadienne*. Sometimes, though, it has taken the form of a national organization, an APA, or online and special-purpose activities.

The Canadian SF Association (CSFA)

The earliest attempt at a national fan activity was the Canadian Science Fiction Association. As Chester Cuthbert describes it, Jack Bowie-Reed, a Canadian political party organizer in the 1940s and 1950s, took to forming local SF clubs in his travels. By the late 1940s, a national organization seemed a logical step.

As Jack Bowie-Reed described it:

Early 1948 saw the CSFA constituted with three member clubs, called constituent organizations. The concept, only slightly modified since, was that each constituent club would have one vote in the elections for an executive. This club would then appoint the

CSFA Executive as it saw fit. Any three science fiction and/or fantasy fans could join the CSFA and obtain all membership privileges but would have no vote. The idea behind this was to avoid a scattered executive of perhaps lazy workers and to substitute for this a centralized executive.

The Hamilton club was elected as the first executive and they in turn elected Paul Revey as the first president of the CSFA. This club issued several circular letters and established correspondence with outlying fans so as to bring about the formation of additional clubs. The holding of the Sixth World Science Fiction Convention, the Torcon, in Toronto was used as a propaganda device to stir up interest.

At the Torcon, in the summer of 1948, there were represented four Canadian science fiction clubs.... These fans held the first CSFA Canada-wide meeting.

(Jack Bowie-Reed, "The Canadian Science Fiction Association", ca. 1953)

Taral Wayne has written elsewhere that the CSFA existed in name only by 1951. Chester Cuthbert of Winnipeg bent his efforts at that time to affiliate clubs in Windsor, Picton, Edmonton and Vancouver, and (nominally) the Toronto Derelicts, as well as another group at McGill University. This was the period during which a mailing list and the Bowie-Reed history were produced. However, this revival was short-lived.

CANADAPA

In September 1972, Vaughn Fraser (then in Toronto) started CANADAPA to form the nucleus of a Canadian fandom. Early members included Ralph Alfonso, Jim Allan,

Vaughn Fraser, Mike and Sue Glicksohn, Richard Labonté, Murray Moore, Daniel Say, and Rosemary Ulyot; later members included Karen Pearlston, Art Hayes, Bill Pauls, Robert Runté, Mike Hall and Doug Barbour, plus American and even British members. But the OSFiC contingent dropped out within a year, and CANADAPA's membership tended more and more to focus on media and comic books. Taral Wayne's opinion is that at this point, 1973 and 1974, a good many OSFiC people were gafiating anyway, and oddly unwelcoming, reclusive comics fans put off the SF fans anyway with their poorly-prepared apazines.

Other people became CM of CANADAPA, including Harland Ronning of Saskatchewan. Jo-anne McBride (then living in Toronto) was elected CM of CANADAPA sometime in 1983. As *New Canadian Fandom* reported, the apa died out in December 1984.

Vaughn Fraser subsequently left Ontario for Richmond, B.C., where he edited *Fantarama* and participated in several of BCSFA's V-Cons. He has since gafiated.

New Canadian Fandom

New Canadian Fandom #1 (from Edmonton, Alberta) appeared in May 1981. Previously Robert Runté had been editing a Canadian fan news column, "Skywriting", in the local clubzine, *Neology*. Linda Ross-Mansfield, on the East Coast, was editing the bimonthly *Northern Lights* at about the same time. JoAnne McBride suggested a sort of stapling-together of regional newsletters, almost-but-not-quite CANADAPA. For these and other reasons, Robert Runté (editing *New Canadian Fandom*) decided that the idea of a newszine was in the air.

NCF was one of a collection of letter-size, mimeographed fanzines coming out of Edmonton in this decade. Even

limited to typed content on mimeo stencils, leavened with electrostenciled illustrations, Edmonton fanzines demonstrated ideas of layout and an interest in overcoming the medium's limitations, which NCF reflected and which later fanzines rarely approach.

As editor of *New Canadian Fandom*, Robert was concerned to establish that there was a Canadian regional fandom, and a growing number of Canadian SF and fantasy writers. At the time he was battling with some attitudes — the attitude of some fans that there couldn't possibly be more than one or two authors in the entire country, and the attitude of some editors (according to him) that stories were unsalable if they were too "Canadian." During its publishing history, NCF informed readers coast-to-coast about each others' clubs and conventions, and advertised the Canadian SF and Fantasy Award.

By the spring of 1983, NCF had become erratic, and ceased coming out at all after 1986.

Maple Leaf Rag

I began the *Maple Leaf Rag*, in October 1983, as a Man with a Mission. My overt objectives in doing the *Maple Leaf Rag* were to disseminate news about Canadian fans, to Canadian fans, all over Canada, and while I was at it, establish that *there is so too* a Canadian fandom, and a population of Canadian writers, that neofans might care to know about. It emerged, though, that I was more serious about proving that there are more effective ways of running fanac than fans apparently wanted to use; and I kept trying to raise a discourse on what worked.

The first issues of MLR (##1-5) look pretty sad now, but I was almost blind to anything besides written information, back then. I persisted. Every issue of MLR was an

experiment, really, and the layout and presentation kept improving, especially after I delegated production to Michael Hall (and later, but for the last few issues, Georges Giguère). Over all, though, the text was usually photoreduced ... perhaps too much so.

The spring after I started the *Rag*, with a circulation under 100 and a very modest page count per issue, Robert Runté and Michael Hall decided to team up with me and sent me the remaining NCF money and subscription addresses. The circulation shot up to 200 for a while. Michael Hall took over my printing, after which MLR was one of those beautifully-produced mimeo zines from Edmonton. Robert instituted a policy that all MLR subscribers would get NCF. As it worked out, the *Rag* usually reached 100 to 150 Canadians every two months or so, missing probably four or five times that number of Canadian SF fans in each major city.

From the first issue of MLR, I was trying to investigate Canadian fandom and fanac. It was slow going. I depended for news on people's volunteered contributions. It becomes clear now that I expected any of the MLR readers to be contributors, like the NCF readers. I expected fans to be writers, and felt everyone was obligated to communicate. A number of fans across the country participated, but they were a minority. Other faneditors didn't always get the idea that I expected them to do the same, starting by reprinting news from the *Rag* about distant parts of Canada.

A recurring topic in MLR was my continuing effort to find out what had become of some national institutions, namely the Canadian SF and Fantasy Award, and the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. This investigation was a little difficult and protracted, and if the tone of MLR got rather sardonic — even sarcastic and snide — what I discovered

about these subjects gave me plenty of reason. It's astonishing now how mild, how gently ironic, some of my editorial comments were in MLR. But I think a mounting frustration was beginning to appear. Despite a corruption fit I threw at V-Con 14/Convention 6, I won a Canadian SF and Fantasy Award for my efforts.

After three and a half years of producing a bimonthly newszine, I was ready to retire. For one thing, I had remembered what my original purpose was, and I realized that convention fandom was not, really, threatened by illiterate hordes of mediafan mind-programmed by Hollywood. Not most of the time.

For another thing, most readers were not interested in a dialogue about practical fanactivity. In fact I now think it was quixotic to try to establish communications between different fandoms and different fan centres; the centre could not hold, and different fan groups were accelerating in different directions, and did not perceive anything they had in common, or anything they needed to know.

Finally, I was ready to get a life, which was the reason why I folded the *Rag* in September 1987 and moved to Vancouver.

A propos of nothing: ever since then I have occasionally received story submissions from people who read of MLR as a fiction market. Apparently an old edition of the *Canadian Writers' Guide* misinterpreted the fact MLR had an SF market news column to mean it was a market for science fiction. I later learned that the publishers of this guide only updated their information every other year, when they could get a grant and a starving graduate student to man their office. This should be a lesson to anyone who publishes a fan newszine and includes market news. You have been warned: death will not release you.

MLR

Michael Skeet in Toronto started the next newszine: *MLR*. Michael was an ESFCAS veteran and professional reporter, who had moved to Toronto with his wife Lorna Toolis (who soon became Collections Head of the Merrill Collection). I think *MLR* was closer to what I was aiming at than *Maple Leaf Rag* — a plain, concise news sheet gathering the fan news into one place, without frills.

At one point Skeet took it on himself to gather and disseminate reviews of all the published works nominated for the Caspers. It struck me then, and I have believed ever since, that someone has to take on this task in order to inform people that the nominees exist, and are eligible. But no-one is specifically *obligated* to do this job. Therefore, it doesn't get done.

An altercation arose in issue #14, when Skeet was covering a dispute that arose around the PineKone II Affair. The overt issue, as far as out-of-towners were concerned, was that this Convention had lost serious money and the chair was left responsible for paying off the debts.

The unadmitted issue, which took a long time to establish, was that as Ottawa fans saw it, the chair had largely created his own financial problems. To his credit he then took responsibility for them.

The reason all this was unadmitted was that Ottawa fans had entered a belief system in which they behaved like the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal: whatever threatened peace and order and good fanriveness couldn't hurt them, as long as they didn't *say* anything about it. With the intention of keeping the peace and holding together a fandom that was fracturing apart, the Ottawa fans were trying not to talk up the issue. It didn't help, they thought, for underinformed out-of-towners to talk up painful issues they were trying to keep

quiet. (I will say nothing at this point about Ottawa being the National Capital.)

The doubtful wisdom of this attitude entirely aside, I believe the Ottawa fans' reaction to Michael Skeet's coverage — *when the PineKone II affair was not particularly secret* — exasperated Skeet, and led him to announce that he would fold the zine. Michael Skeet is now pursuing professional fiction writing.

Xeno-File

About this time (1988/89), Paul Valcour and the sponsors of Con-Version each announced their intention to go into the fan reporting business. Paul Valcour's *Canadian SF Quarterly* didn't appear, as it turned out. *XenoFile*, edited by Ron Currie, took on the newszine function, after a lapse of three or four months. This coverage amounted to a page or two each issue of news rounded up from various places around the country. Ron Currie's last edition was #10, in about 1992; he now lives in Maple Ridge, B.C.

A newsprint edition of *Xeno-File* ("Your SF Convention Magazine") later appeared in early 1993, edited by Sheldon Wiebe, produced by Web offset. This was intended as a mutual-promotion magazine produced in collaboration between the various Calgary conventions. That was edition Vol. 10, #0; Vol. 10, #1 held the same contents as a genzine or clubzine, as Dale Speirs tells me. The final issue was used as the Con-Version 10 program book, edited by John Hilton (subtitled "Includes *Xeno-File* Summer 1993").

Con-TRACT

John Mansfield founded *Con-TRACT*, a regular listing of Canadian conventions, in August 1988 when he was still living and working in Edmonton. (I gather that Mr.

Mansfield is or was in the Canadian Reserves, and his enterprises move with him; hence different issues came from Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg.) From the outset *Con-TRACT* was avowedly aimed at serving concons and exhibitors (dealers/hucksters). As it worked out, *Con-TRACT* often included non-fannish events of interest to dealers. From the first, *Con-TRACT* included short con reports and opinion/editorial articles after the convention listing, as space permitted. The second issue #1 (labelled Volume 1, #1), from Calgary, was dated January/February, 1989, and gave permission to photocopy the issue. By issue #3 (June/July), the zine had settled into the bimonthly frequency it has now.

John Mansfield had an unfortunate habit of occasionally making cryptic remarks that look snarky in print, and apparently assumed things before they were established.

When several conventions were held in the same year in the Calgary area, he generalized the oversaturation of that convention "market" to Canada as a whole.

In 1994 he was chair of the Winnipeg Worldcon, and was writing things like this:

This years CUFF administrator offered up free transportation, accommodation & membership in the World Science Fiction Convention to ANY member of Canadian fandom EAST of the Ont/MB border. NO ONE took them up on it!!

How are we supposed to deal with this. Heck, if they are not interested in the World Con, why should be try to offer them a trip to Carvention??

Does this prove that paying for food for 5 days is a financial burden to every Eastern fan?? Or is it, the fact that news just does not get past on in Canada

unless it deals with the colour of Picards underwear or is PC?? ...

(John Mansfield, *Con-TRACT* 6:4 Jul/Aug 1994)

A man might be excused for talking this way if he works 18 hours a day for over a year, which can happen on a Worldcon committee. John Mansfield might be excused if (as it seems) he provided the *only* fanzine advertising that CUFF received in 1994. He was doing his part; but what CUFF needed was the same effort from *all* fanzine editors, a significant advertising effort at a range of Canadian cons ... Now, whose job was this? Not solely John Mansfield's.

The issue at hand is that fandom at large *forgets about CUFF and CSFFA every year*. It is as if visual mass media broadcast a malign and sinister force to subvert our memories, the way the KGB used to broadcast microwaves at U.S. embassies. But our correspondence failed to establish this to Mansfield.

In the same issue, Mansfield wrote:

DEATH OF CANADIAN FANDOM

The number of conventions in Canada continues to decrease. The list above may look impressive but remove the gaming & media cons and the list is very short. That coupled with the failure of CUFF this year, the poor response for nominations for the Aurora Awards, and the fact that NO Canadian Specialty book store is attending a 4,500 pure SF con all seem to be hand writing on the wall. ConAdian may be the swan song. Do you care??

(John Mansfield, *Con-TRACT* 6:4 Jul/Aug 1994)

This is to assume that conventions, in fact, have become the be-all and end-all of fandom, as far as contemporary fans are concerned. (Mind you, that's an understandable impression ...)

Woodsfield's *Con-TRACT* may be doing more effective work than any other zine at enlightening Canadian fans about Canadian cons across the country. Ironically this may be for the same reason as special-interest organizations have appeared: *Con-TRACT* likewise focuses on serving a specific, perceived need in the Canadian SF field.

SF Canada

In 1989, at the first ConText in Edmonton, Canadian SF writers met and launched a new organization, SWAC (later renamed SF Canada). This was apparently the first professional association for Canadian writers in the SF and fantasy publishing categories, and perhaps the first acknowledgment in English Canada of the number of potential members.

SF Canada can be contacted c/o TASFA, WordWorks Bldg., 10523 - 100 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0A8. Their public newsletter, *Communiqué*, is a bilingual and bimonthly collection of writers' news, market reports, and recent publications. *Communiqué* is now edited by Derryl Murphy, and can be contacted at 8333 - 82 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6C 0Y5. His E-mail address is 73522.1404@Compuserve.com.

Under the Ozone Hole

Under the Ozone Hole is edited by John Herbert and Karl Johanson of Victoria. These are the same jokers who brought us "Worldcon '89 at Myles' House", the spoof of nothing-but-the-biggest con advertising that made Myles Bos a world-famous cartoon figure. (Myles Bos, the real person, has since

fled screaming into mundania.) In addition, John Herbert is a former editor of *Atavachron*, a Star Trek clubzine you've probably never heard of.

UTOH is a cleanly-produced, DTP-generated, photocopied genzine, good-humoured and rather light reading. But, as in *XenoFile*, the Canadian news amounts to maybe one or two pages in each issue of UTOH. This is as close as we now come to a national fan newszine in Canada.

About the time its second issue came out, UTOH won the 1993 Aurora Award for best fanzine: "they attribute [this] to having the sent the zine to people such as Robert Runté," writes Andrew Murdoch. The zine also won Auroras in 1994 and 1995.

The Canadian SF and Fantasy Foundation

About 1994, one Kathryn Grimbly-Bethke disseminated flyers promoting the Canadian SF and Fantasy Foundation, a new nationwide association for the support of SF activities and professionals in Canada. Kathryn Grimbly-Bethke was a member of OSFiC (the Ontario SF Club) as long as ten years ago. Stated aims of the CSFFF were "encouraging the growth of Canadian imaginative works; increasing the accessibility of imaginative works in Canada; providing support, education, liaison, resources and communication across Canada and internationally; and promoting literacy". A draft Constitution and set of By-laws are dated May 2, 1995.

The goals of the CSFFF include gaining nation-wide support for the Merrill Collection. Since its founding, the Merrill Collection has faced funding cutbacks and proposals to break up the collection among several locations. Madge Aalto (the first head of the Spaced Out Library, now chief librarian of the Vancouver Public Library) commented lastfall that there has been an ideological attitude going the rounds

that special library collections are somehow elitist and politically incorrect. Perhaps this explains the attempts to cut funding and space for the Merrill Collection, far more than for other special collections. In any event, the crisis is past, and the CSFFF is turning its attention to other kinds of SFnal support.

The 1995-1997 Board of Directors includes Karl Johanson (Pacific Regional Director), Robert Runté (Western Regional Director), Peter Halasz (Ontario Regional Director), and Elisabeth Vonarburg (Quebec Regional Director); the position of Regional Director for the Atlantic Provinces remains vacant. Directors-at-Large include Derryl Murphy and Diane Walton, of SF Canada, and Kathryn Grimbly-Bethke as Chief Operating Officer.

The CSFFF can be contacted c/o Kathryn Grimbly-Bethke at 42 Park St., Scarborough, Ontario M1N 2N5, fax (416) 267-8800.

Canadian Fan Network

The *Canadian Fan Network* is "An On Line Zine For Those Interested In Canadian Fandom"; issue #1 was broadcast in April 1995.

As editor Joe Casey described it,

This news zine will be sent four time a year, roughly, January, April, July, October. It will be used to promote Canadian conventions, awards, newsletters and other activities that Canadian Fandom is involved in. Included in this issue will be reviews and contact information on several newsletters I am currently receiving, information and flyers on a couple of local, to me anyway, conventions and the Aurora Voting Ballot. Articles and information from other sources is greatly recieved so don't be shy, just let us now

what's happening in your area of the country. I'm hoping to include information here from Charlottown PEI to Vancouver Island BC (*sic*).

(Joe Casey, *Canadian Fan Network* #1, April 1995)

CFN #1 contained an editorial and introductory letter, the Aurora voting ballot, a Can*Con PR, Concinnity and Toronto Trek flyers, news of a Maritime con, a letter of comment, and reviews of Canadian zines. I have not received a second issue as of August 1995. Joe Casey can be contacted at am278@freenet.carleton.ca.

Conclusions

Tara Wayne once drew a map of what he thought were regional congoing "circuits" in North America. The result was a sort of Venn diagram, amoeboid shaded areas superimposed over the continental map, sometimes overlapping and sometimes widely separated; and many of the regions created — Northwest, Northeast and Midwest particularly — straddled the 49th Parallel. The exceptions were the Quebec and Maritimes fandoms.

One is strongly reminded of Joel Garreau's *The Nine Nations of North America*; his thesis was that North America divides up into nine or so cultural and economic areas, with fundamentally different living conditions, quite without regard to regional or national borders. It would go far to explain how different the issues and the practices can be in different regional fan groups.

So on the one hand, it appears that there is no single natural *Canadian* fandom, in that people here do not all go to much the same cons, or see many of the same people, or read some of the same zines, or know many of the same people. They *can't*.

A TABLE OF RELATIVE DISTANCES
BETWEEN FAN CENTRES IN CANADA:

Victoria - Vancouver:	105 km
Edmonton - Calgary:	299 km
Edmonton - Regina:	750 km
Regina - Winnipeg:	571 km
Winnipeg - Toronto:	2099 km
Toronto - Ottawa:	399 km
Ottawa - Montreal:	190 km
Ottawa - Quebec City:	460 km
Toronto - Halifax:	1788 km

My acquaintances and I, for example, find it surprisingly more difficult to travel to the nearest Canadian cons out of town than to the nearest American ones. Item: airfares to many points in the States, or even in Europe, are three-figure sums, sometimes under \$500; airfares to many other parts of Canada are four-figure sums. Item: the driving time from Vancouver to Seattle is about three hours, to Portland or Moscow, Idaho is six to eight hours — but the time to Calgary or Edmonton is 16 to 18 hours. From Halifax to Toronto is about a days' driving; even going to Boston is a major expedition. Fans in the States and central Canada simply don't grasp how far-flung are most Canadian fan centres. This is why (I suspect) Calgary and especially Halifax are the most isolated fan centres.

That's only part of the story, though. In thanking Linda Ross-Mansfield for a good time at the 1988 KeyCon, GoH Michael Skeet gave a clue to something else that was also happening here: "Winnipeg fans still seem astonishingly uninterested in what goes on in the rest of the country, and so attendance at the various Convention panels (other than

Writing SF in Canada, of course) ranged from pitiful to non-existent."

(MLR 6, June 1988)

Wayne Murdoch corroborates this in talking about Maritimes fandom. It isn't just the distance and expense of out-of-town travel; out-of-town correspondence, advertising their own cons, or finding out about other fan groups, just isn't a high priority. Is this typical across Canada?

On the other hand, Robert Runté (as editor of *New Canadian Fandom*) was concerned to establish that there was a *Canadian* regional fandom; also, that there was in fact a growing number of Canadian SF and fantasy writers.

He may be considered more successful in his second agenda. By 1989, ConText, the print-oriented convention, demonstrated that Canadian SF pros were numerous and interactive enough to form an association. But this was well after *New Canadian Fandom's* publishing history.

As editor of *Maple Leaf Rag*, I *expected* all the readers to be contributors. I expected fans to be writers, and felt everyone was obligated to communicate. By no means everybody felt the same way I did. In fact the further you went east, the more uneven the fan news coverage was. The Maritimes were particularly inconsistent in this respect.

Like Robert, I had brought to fanac what I must call naive misconceptions. And it took some time to wear them down. Newszine editors since have brought their own misconceptions, and taken as long to part with their illusions.

The editors of *XenoFile*, and now of *Under the Ozone Hole*, seemed to do their fanzines first, and then paste in a page or two of Canadian fan news. I'm not saying it was an

afterthought to them; maybe the editors were unaware of any more news, or any more sources. But the amount of coverage still seems pretty skimpy to me, compared to *Maple Leaf Rag's* and *MLR's*. A lot more can be done.

Canadian newszine publishing teaches the same lesson as *The Enchanted Duplicator*; whatever a fan accomplishes, he gains by his own, unaided efforts. Providing a news source for what is, let's face it, an entirely voluntary interest group. A national newszine will be attempted by a motivated *individual*, when and if chance and circumstance provides such an individual ... but expecting general cooperation and continuing support is not going to get results.

Canadian fan news will continue to be sporadic. But it will probably be more frequent, as the fan population grows. I await future developments with fear and apprehension. If we're really unlucky every province, nay, every city will have its official newszine. SF clubs will dominate civic politics. Civilization as we know it may not survive.

Fran Skene once told me straight out that the next step for a science fiction fan was to become a science fiction writer. I think that's a fallacy. Even granting *arguendo* that some fans do become writers, this only acknowledges a minority of fans, and a minority of SF writers. Still, a number of today's Canadian SF professionals and members of SF Canada are former fans: Michael Skeet, Robert Charles Wilson, William Gibson and Sally McBride, among others. Former faneditor Robert Runté is now to co-edit the forthcoming *Tesseract's 5* anthology. Editing a national newszine isn't to blame for this condition, however. Lots of Canadian SF and fantasy authors never came near fanediting, such as S.M. Stirling and other veterans of Toronto's Bunch of Seven workshop. Lots of

faneditors have never come near professional publication or world recognition, such as myself.

Con-TRACT, and the various SF associations that have sprung up, are concurrent special-interest activities within the same arena. SF Canada is a professional writers' organization; *Con-TRACT* is specifically dedicated to listing upcoming Canadian conventions; the Canadian Fan Network is an on-line Canadian fan magazine; the CSFFF is a nationwide SF promotional support group. It may be that this kind of focus is the most successful and promising approach for SFnal communications and support to take.

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THE CANADIAN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION
by Jack Bowie-Reed

[This fanhistory was written circa 1953, and is an n-th generation reprint via Murray Moore's WAYBACK MACHINE #2, which in turn is via Larry J. Touzinsky's FAN TO SEE.]

The spring of 1953 marks the fifth birthday of the Canadian Science Fiction Association, five years of progress and, at times, retrogression. The fifth year of life, however, has seen a considerable amount of lost ground regained and it is safe to say that the CSFA is in a stronger position today than at any time in its eventful history. This is in large measure due to the strong hand of leadership given it by its president, Chester Cuthbert of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Historical Sketches

Science fiction had its dim beginnings in Canada shortly before the outbreak of World War II, the beginnings of which almost all traces have been lost and which constitute the mythology and legends of fandom in Canada. Almost every fan has heard of the early organizations and fanzines of Toronto and Vancouver but try and track them down! However the advent of war in 1939 and the patriotism of fans spelled the doom of early fandom.

The first glimmerings of light broke through in 1942 with the trusty work of three of Canada's "senators of fandom". It was in this year that the Canadian Amateur Fantasy Press was formed with three member fanzines. These were LIGHT published in Parry Sound by Les Crutch, CENSORED published in Kapuskasing by Fred Hurter, and CANADIAN FANDOM published in Toronto by Beak Taylor.

The fall of 1946 saw the formation of the McGill/Montréal Science Fiction Society, which organization adopted CENSORED as its club organ, Fred Hurter having happily moved to the "City of Sin", "le petit Paris".

Not to be outdone Toronto the Good, the "City of God" produced that organization known as the Derelicts early in 1947. This was followed a few months later by the Lakehead Science Fiction Society in Hamilton. A steady stream of correspondence between the three clubs resulted in the formation of the Canadian Science Fiction Association early in 1948.

Expansion and Growth

Early 1948 saw the CSFA constituted with three member clubs, called constituent organizations. The concept, only slightly modified since, was that each constituent club would have one vote in the elections for an execu-

tive. This club would then appoint the CSFA Executive as it saw fit. Any three science fiction and/or fantasy fans could join the CSFA and obtain all membership privileges but would have no vote. The idea behind this was to avoid a scattered executive of perhaps lazy workers and to substitute for this a centralized executive.

The Hamilton club was elected as the first executive and they in turn elected Paul Revey as the first president of the CSFA. This club issued several circular letters and established correspondence with outlying fans so as to bring about the formation of additional clubs. The holding of the Sixth World Science Fiction Convention, The Torcon, in Toronto was used as a propaganda device to stir up interest.

At the Torcon, in the summer of 1948, there were represented four Canadian science fiction clubs, besides the fans from many unorganized centres. The fourth club to be represented was the Picton Science Fiction Society, formed about a month prior to the convention.

These fans held the first CSFA Canada-wide meeting. The main decision at this meeting was to form correspondence clubs so as to enable individual fans in small centres to obtain a vote at CSFA elections through joining such groups.

Besides this, amendments were introduced to the constitution and Jack Bowie-Reed was elected to the post of National Organizer. Affiliation was made with the CAFP, Lloyd Eshbach was elected as Honorary President, and a number of projects were delegated to individuals and clubs. Two correspondence clubs were quickly formed. These were the Northern Fantasy Fan Federation, centred on Les Crutch at Parry Sound, and the Fantastellar Association, centred on Alastair Cameron at Deep River.

[continued next page]

1948 saw the formations of four new science fiction clubs. These were the Deseronto SFS, the Halifax SFS, the Ottawa SFS, and the Thames SFS at London, Ontario. Correspondence was also established with the national organizations in Australia, Great Britain, and the USA with a view towards the formation of a World Science Fiction League.

Eastern Decline and Westward Ho!

The dawning of 1949 saw a smoothly functioning CSFA with a published newsletter, numerous projects underway, and ten constituent clubs functioning. The organization flush with initial success could see nothing but a rosy future ahead.

The first thunderheads had appeared, however, although none in the organization discerned them at that time. The Hamilton organization, although it had expanded until there were close to fifty attending its meetings, began to hit organizational snags. The first break occurred with the resignation of Paul Revey, CSFA President, and his replacement by Clare Richards. Several of the founding members of the club moved away from Hamilton during the year and the CSFA commenced to decline with the decline of the Hamilton club, its Executive. To make matters worse, none of the other constituent clubs felt itself in a position to assume the burden, and Hamilton by default continued as the executive body until the fall of 1950.

The only ray of hope in 1949 was the formation of the Windsor SFS during the year and the establishment of contacts in western Canada, particularly in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Brandon, and Winnipeg.

Late in 1949 saw the collapse of the Deseronto SFS, bringing the number of constituent clubs back down to ten. Dead rot set in at a fast pace during 1950 and the CSFA seemed doomed to death. The newsletter had

ceased publication and correspondence from Hamilton practically ceased with the collapse of the Hamilton club early in 1950. In quick succession Halifax gave up the ghost, the London group gasped its last sigh, Windsor coalesced with the Michigan Science Fantasy Society, and the Fantastellar Association ended with Alastair Cameron leaving Deep River. Ottawa quietly declined to nothing early in 1951. The Northern Fantasy Fan Federation almost ceased operating but did not quite give up the ghost. The fall of 1950 saw the National Organizer, Jack Bowie-Reed, join Canada's Special Force and leave for service in Korea and Japan.

It was under these circumstances that the Winnipeg SFS was formed in the fall of 1950 and it, together with its organizational difficulties of forming a sound group in Winnipeg, assumed the burden of reviving the CSFA.

Reorganization and Revitalization

The spring of 1951 saw the CSFA strings picked up one by one and carefully put straight by the new CSFA executive headed by Chester Cuthbert as President and Cam Brown as Secretary. The newsletter was revived in February of that year and a survey was made of what fans remained and of the state of the organization in general. Of the separate clubs that had functioned at one time or another, only three were still in good operational order. These three were the McGill/Montréal club, Picton, and Winnipeg. Toronto and Les Crutch's correspondence group existed as shadows only.

Of all the numerous projects which had been undertaken, only one was still being worked upon and this was completion. This project was a very complete Fantasy Classification System undertaken by Alastair Cameron. Some fifty-two pages long, this was published by the CSFA in 1952. The affiliated CAFF, which at its peak had seven

member fanzines, had dwindled back down to its original three, and the demise of CANADIAN FANDOM was imminent.

Although a considerable amount of re-organization was accomplished during 1951, little was evident to the fan world in general, as most of the work consisted of laying the foundations of a strong organization. The circulating library project was picked up by the Winnipeg group and several thousand books were assembled throughout 1951 and 1952. The McGill/Montréal group resumed the author pseudonym project, and late in 1951 Jack Bowie-Reed was delegated to write a history of Canadian fandom.

The CANADIAN FAN DIRECTORY, a listing of Canadian fans, from 500 to 1000 in number, was issued in the fall of 1952, and although this list contains untold errors, and is dated in many of its entries, it is the first step in the establishment of an up-to-date listing of fans in Canada.

Early 1952 saw the formation of the Vancouver SFS and the founding of the fanzine VANATIONS by Norman Browne. This club subsequently affiliated with the CSFA. 1952 also saw the formation of a club in Calgary and of clubs and fanzines in Toronto and Windsor. None of these latter organizations have affiliated with the CSFA as yet. In November 1952 the Edmonton SFS was organized and this group immediately affiliated with the CSFA.

The dawning of 1953 sees the state of the CSFA as follows:

Executive: Honourary President: Lloyed Eshbach of Reading, Penn. President: Chester Cuthbert of St. Vital, Manitoba Secretary-Treasurer: Cam Brown of Winnipeg National Organizer: Jack Bowie-Reed of Edmonton, Alberta

Constituent Clubs: McGill/Montréal SFS - founded fall 1946. Picton SFS - founded summer 1948. Winnipeg SFS - founded fall 1950. Vancouver SFS - founded winter 1951-52. Edmonton SFS - founded fall 1952.

Unaffiliated Clubs: Western SF Association (Calgary) - founded spring 1952.

Embryo Groups: Toronto, Windsor

Total Membership: Approximately 150, of which 100 are in the five constituent clubs.

A Rosy Future?

Although the number of constituent clubs today are less than half of the peak number of eleven in 1949, the clubs today are better established and are built on firmer foundations. For the first time since the inception of the CSFA, 1952 has seen the completion of some of the projects undertaken, and this should help solidify its future. Most important of all, however, the CSFA of today has the experience of five years of trials and tribulations behind it and this, more than anything else, should guarantee a future which will dim all past achievements in comparison.

The existence of one club, the Western SF Association in Calgary, Alberta, which so far has refused to affiliate with the CSFA, should serve as a prod to the CSFA and keep it from falling back into complacency. Nothing helps better than competition, and the WSFA's policy of taking members from anywhere in western Canada should stimulate the CSFA's activities not only in the west but also in the east concurrently. Although affiliation has been sought by the CSFA, it might be better in the long run if the WSFA never affiliated, or at least remained independent for some time to come.