

# OPUNTIA

# 54

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Whole-numbered OPUNTIAs are sercon, x.1 issues are reviewzines, x.2 issues are indexes, and x.5 issues are perzines.

## CALGARY IN 2005

Calgary will be hosting Westercon 58 on 2005, on the long weekend of July 1 to 4, which neatly encapsulates both the Canadian and American national holidays. Westercon is a large regional SF convention that perambulates mostly up and down the Pacific Coast from California to Vancouver, occasionally veering further inland. Announced Guests of Honour are S.M. Stirling, Dave Duncan, and Mark Ferrari (artist). Fan GoHs are Cliff Samuels and his wife Eileen Capes, who have decades of convention-running experience, not only Calgary events, but participation in larger conventions elsewhere.

The announced theme is "Due North", whatever that means. (Although Calgary was founded by the Mounties, it has had its own municipal police force for a century.) There will be all the usual events of an SF convention. Venue is the Westin Hotel in the downtown core. This hotel has hosted previous SF conventions, as well as philatelic shows, so the staff are used to strange people wandering up and down the hallways. It is on the edge of Chinatown, for all you ginger beef fanatics. (I'm a lemon chicken man myself.)

John Mansfield and Randy McCharles are co-chairmen. Details at: [www.calgaryin2005.org](http://www.calgaryin2005.org)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]

FROM: Mark Plummer 2003-11-27  
14 Northway Road  
Croydon, Surrey CR0 6JE, England

I would query your contention about mail standardized with the return address on the upper left of the envelope. I accept that it does seem to be the standard in most countries but it's very much a minority practice in the United Kingdom. I think it's still relatively uncommon to cite a return address on the envelope at all, and if one is given, it's most likely to be on the back. The latter is what the Royal Mail recommends for inland mail. For the overseas post, they suggest that the sender's address should be included "in a position where it will not be confused with the destination address", although it is still suggested that top-left on the front is where the Airmail sticker goes if one is required. Not quite sure why we refuse to play along with the international consensus, although Royal Mail singles out Canada as the one country where the postal code comes after the country name.

[No return address was a common policy in the old days where postage was paid by the recipient, before the reforms of 1840, to ensure delivery. In North America, where the population of the

pioneer age was extremely mobile, return addresses were more common to ensure forwarding. Airmail stickers go on the upper left by international agreement but this still leaves room for a return address. Canada Post's peculiar insistence on having the postal code on the last line is to make life easier for the machine operator to read and type the postal code into the canceller machine.] -2-

FROM: Joseph Major 2003-12-01  
1409 Christy Avenue  
Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040

One of the big things was the migration of the Trekzine to the Internet. While this ended the problem of seeing a perfectbound quasibook costing \$15 being called a fanzine, it did spread them about. Once it no longer cost money to publish their ish, they wrote more and more and it got worse and worse. Sue Mason, in the latest issue of PLOKTA, discussed writing LotR slash, and I wish the Tolkien Estate could do something about that.

[But on the bright side, no trees died in vain to preserve for posterity the thought of elves bugging dwarves. Unfortunately, too many did die in the pre-Internet era so that Spock and Kirk could do the thing that dares not speak its name. On a more serious note, the Internet demonstrates what was noticed with the

advent of the photocopier, that the easier it is to reproduce and distribute text, the more trivial it becomes.]

[Re: bloc voting for awards] The NorEasCon people cited the bloc nominations on the final Hugo ballot. The people nominated withdrew, then changed their minds. A statement purporting to be from some of the bloc-vote nominators was disseminated, but it was so implausible that it would have been worse to the nominators than to the convention. One of the alleged nominators said he had not bought or even known of the nomination issued in his name.

FROM: Lloyd Penney  
1706 - 24 Eva Road  
Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B2

2003-12-03

Those campaigning ads in the Torcon programme book were tacky, but based on the final nomination lists for the Hugo they worked to some extent: Alex von Thorn got 32 nominations for Best Fan Writer and THE VOYAGEUR received 30. After that ad, I imagine most if not all of those nominations came from the club alone. You say it would be fun if other media groups discovered that they could bloc vote themselves onto the ballot. This happened some years ago after fanzine fans fell a little lax in their participation in Hugo nominations. A media zine and a costuming

zine made it onto the ballot. Neither won, but this scared the life back into those nominators. Is it worth setting up media versions of these awards, or would groups like the club in Toronto attempt to grab both sets?

[The rules could allow only one category for a zine to be nominated, but the problem with increasing categories is that soon there would be a dozen zine categories alone, not to mention such things as Best Novel (Hardcover), Best Novel (Trade Paperback), Best Novel (Mass Market Paperback), and so forth. One danger point for most fannish zines is that they have little or no SF in them, so other non-SF zines could be equally entitled to nomination. Say, for example, KAIRAN or XEROGRAPHY DEBT in the Best Fanzine category, or Violet Jones or Peter Netmail for Best Fan Writer.]

**I ALSO HEARD FROM:** Chester Cuthbert, Violet Jones, Ned Brooks, Diane Bertrand, Phlox Icona, Ficus, Joel Cohen, Gianni Simone, Pascal Lenoir, Jerry Kaufman, Henry Welch, Robert Lichtman

## SEEN IN THE LITERATURE

Boorstin, Daniel (1967 September) **Welcome to the Consumption Community.** FORTUNE 76(3):118-120, 131-138

*"A Consumption Community consists of people who have a feeling of shared well-being, shared risks, common interests, and common concerns that come from consuming the same kinds of objects."* C.C.s could not come into existence until mass production became widespread in the middle 1800s. Before that, people had their requirements done by tradesmen such as tailors or craftsmen. The spread of C.C.s increased in the late 1800s with the introduction of mail order and national advertising. A C.C. requires that people are aware of their membership. For example, BMW owners but not Kleenex users. People must be able to freely enter or leave the C.C. (no exams or society membership required; for example, if you publish a zine you are part of zinedom automatically), and be able to show common loyalty ("Fandom is a proud and lonely thing").

Speirs: The idea of a C.C. was intended by Boorstin for people who consume things such as fine Scotch whiskey or drive the same type of car, but it applies equally well to SF fandom and zinesters. Dress like a Goth and hang out in their clubs, and you

have stated what your C.C. is.

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Wear cowboy hats and scream "Yeehaw!" every so often for no apparent reason and you are a blue-collar worker in a small town. Wear a baseball cap and steel-toed boots and you are a member of the cowboy C.C. Gain weight, read too many books and watch too much television, and your C.C. is SF fandom. And so forth.

Underwood, D.R., B.W. Jones, and P.N. Sleep (2003) **The evolution of habitable zones during stellar lifetimes and its implications on the search for extraterrestrial life.** INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ASTROBIOLOGY 2:289-299

*"Results show that about half of the 104 known extrasolar planetary systems could possibly have been housing an Earth-mass planet in habitable zones during at least the past billion years, and about three-quarters of the 104 could do so for at least a billion years at some time during their main sequence lives. Whether such Earth-mass planets could have formed is an urgent question now being investigated by others, with encouraging results."*

Worobey, M., et al (2004) **Contaminated polio vaccine theory refuted.** NATURE 428:820

*“Despite strong evidence to the contrary, speculation continues that the AIDS virus, human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1), may have crossed into humans as a result of contamination of the oral polio vaccine (OPV). This ‘OPV / AIDS theory’ claims that chimpanzees from the vicinity of Stanleyville, now Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of Congo, were the source of a simian immunodeficiency virus (SIVcpz) that was transmitted to humans when chimpanzee tissues were allegedly used in the preparation of OPV. Here we show that SIVcpz is indeed endemic in wild chimpanzees of this region but that the circulating virus is phylogenetically distinct from all strains of HIV-1, providing direct evidence that these chimpanzees were not the source of the human AIDS pandemic.”*

Speirs: The fallacy of this paper is that the authors believe that the facts will suffice to demolish any conspiracy theorists. No such thing, of course, because the conspiracy nuts will nitpick the slightest triviality they can find in this paper, while ignoring the plank in their own eye. Kennedy was killed by a lone gunman, computers are not reverse-engineered from the Roswell saucer, there really was mass murder of Jews in concentration camps, and AIDS is not the result of polio vaccine. But nothing will stop the conspiracy theorists.

Tosco, M. (2004) **The case for a laissez-faire language policy.** LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION 24:165-181

*“Much current literature on language death is flawed by not taking into sufficient account the role of the nation-states in bringing about much of today’s global language endangerment. It is argued that modern nation-states, different from any other type of social organization, are based on forced integration, and that a reduction of linguistic diversity within their borders is an inescapable component of nation-building. Two essentially different kinds of processes potentially leading to language loss are recognized, with the presence of a certain level of coercion making the difference between the two: while economic, cultural, etc., pressure is always present in language replacement, coercion is rather typical of the establishment of national languages, coupled with the extension of the role of the state as a provider of public services and goods, as typical of modern Western-style societies.”*

Speirs: There is no religious bigotry in Canada but be careful what language you speak in a public place.

## THE GREAT ECKVILLE FIRE OF 1928

by Dale Speirs

Every settlement in Canada has had its Great Fire. Indeed, some have had two or more, depending on how long it took the citizenry to learn from their mistakes, such as failure to cut fireguards around their towns in forested areas, or the bad habit of erecting wood-frame buildings shoulder to shoulder. The village of Eckville had its Great Fire on July 30, 1928.

I was born in Eckville in 1955 and spent the first half of my childhood there; its population hasn't changed much since then. Eckville is located in the west central district of Alberta, roughly halfway between Red Deer and Rocky Mountain House. My mother's family on both sides were Finns. Her grandfather was the first person to carry the mails in the district in 1903, one year before the village was founded and two years before Alberta became a province.

The business district on main street, then as now decades later, was about three blocks long, if you include the side street. Up until 1928, the buildings were jammed in close together, so that in the early hours of the morning of July 30, when one caught fire, the spread was uncontrollable. Before noon the east side of the main block was nothing more than embers and foundations. The fire destroyed a hotel, Chinese restaurant, numerous stores, and

the post office.

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Postmaster Dan Clausen, assisted by volunteers, saved all the mails from the fire, as well as most of the fixtures and paraphernalia. Along with the other businesses, the post office moved into the town hall. Because everything had been saved, Clausen was able to re-open the post office by 13h30 that same day. A remarkable recovery!

The temporary post office was originally set up in a small corner of the town hall, but pending completion of a new building, the post office was given better quarters a few weeks later, sharing its new location with a pool room. An amusing article from the September 9 issue of the RED DEER ADVOCATE reported as follows.

*"The new office has a good appearance, being about 16 feet wide, and the whole depth of the building. The entrance for the public is from the main street, while on the north side there is a door to Mr. Clausen's office and the mail-sorting department. During the time since the fire, as is known, the office has been in a corner of the old hall, while the rest room was fitted up as a restaurant. The barber had his chair on the stage. We heard remarks that that arrangement was very convenient; you could have a shave, sit down at a table, have a lunch, and reach over and get your mail. All facilities in the same room."*

## YOU CAN'T TELL THE PLAYERS WITHOUT A PROGRAMME

by Dale Speirs

A number of years ago I compiled a timeline of Canadian political parties, not having been able to find anything elsewhere. The major political parties are charted on pages 8 and 9. This chart was recently updated because the Canadian Alliance party (far right) merged in December 2003 with the Progressive Conservative Party (centre right) to form the Conservative Party. It is the belief of the Canadian rightists that this will end vote splitting and help the federal Tories finally oust the governing Liberals.

I'm not holding out much hope in that since the main policy of the Tories is fratricide, with an occasional bout of sororicide. (For those with Web access, use the keywords 'Belinda Stronach', 'Kim Campbell', and 'Conservative' at google.ca (not .com) and request only pages from Canada.) Normally the Liberals try to keep their family feuds quiet but this time around is different. The current Prime Minister, Paul Martin, was formerly Finance Minister in the Jean Chretien government, but there is no love between them. Chretien was pushed into retirement in December 2003 but managed to sabotage Martin with a few scandals left behind. I won't even mention the purges Martin has carried out after being elected party leader.

Although the federal Progressive Conservatives are gone, the provincial parties of that name still exist (federal and provincial parties are independent of each other even if using the same name). The Tories have formed the Alberta government since 1971; before that we had the Social Credit party from 1935 to 1971 (who are now extirpated from the political scene). Never mind the Soviets; it's Alberta that has always had one-party rule.

Then there are the fringe parties, mostly at the provincial level. A few names are as below, but the list is not complete.

Alberta First

Saskatchewan First (elected members in province)

Alberta Independence

Natural Law (even lunatics have the right to campaign)

Marijuana (go on, take a guess!)

Rest of Canada

Western Guard (neo-fascist)

various Communist / Marxist factions (who can keep track?)

Confederation of Regions (elected members in New Brunswick)

Green

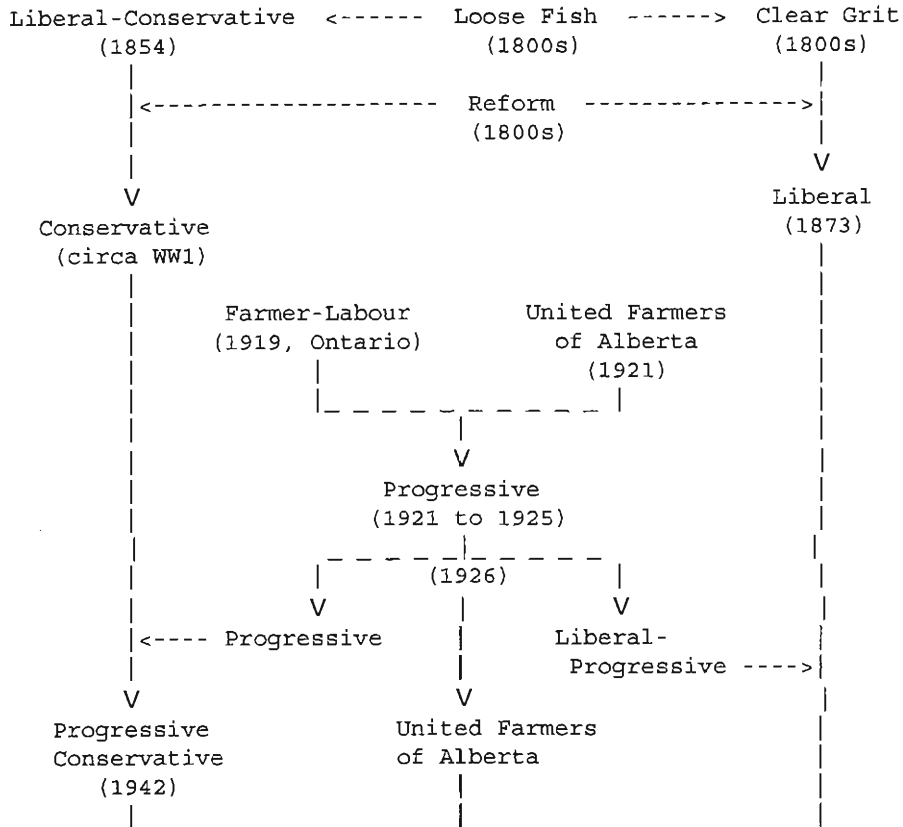
Labour Party

Christian Heritage

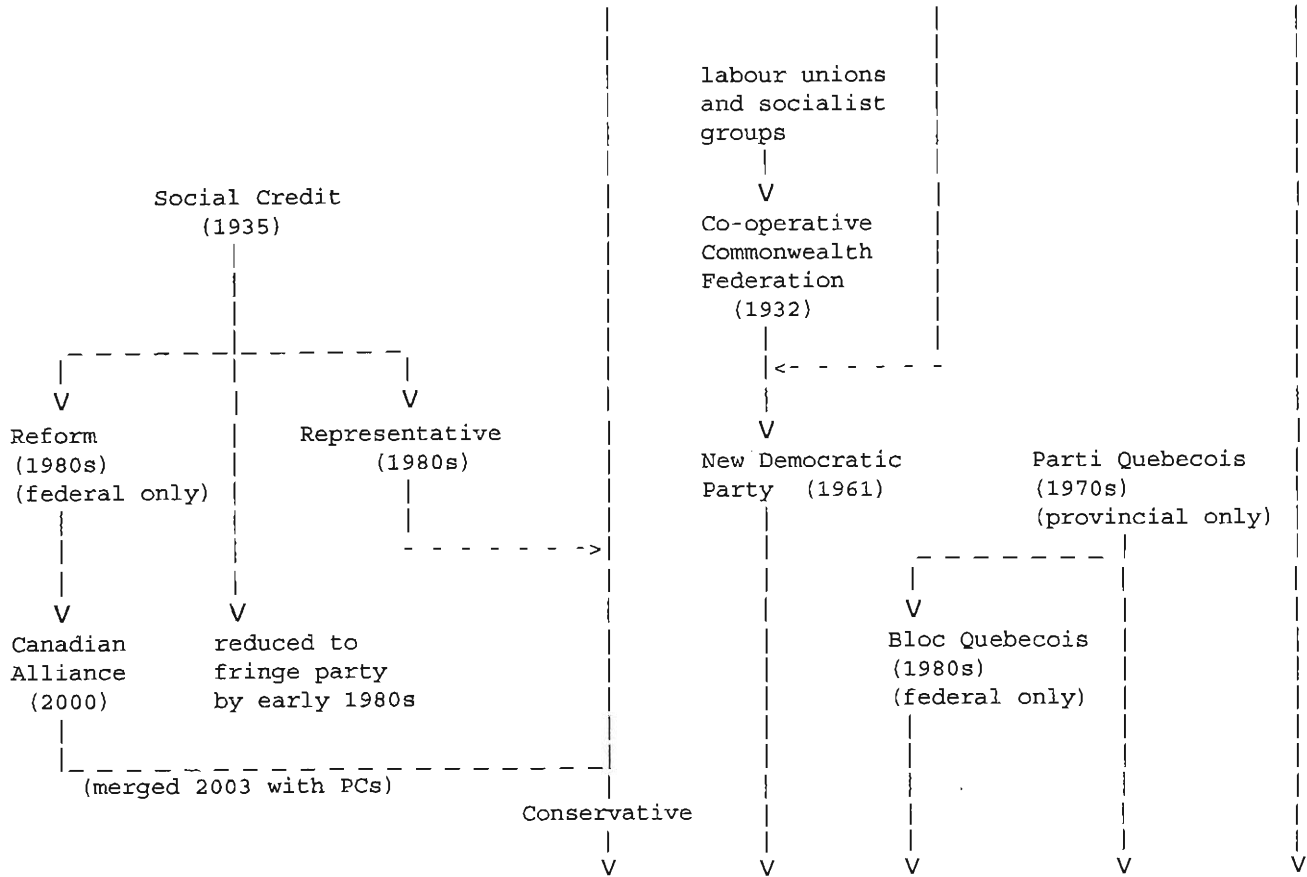
Western Canada Concept (separatist, presumed extinct)

Canadian Action

Mainstream parties.







When last we left New Age guru and all-around deluded Englishman David Icke (OPUNTIA 29.5, page 6), he had predicted the apocalypse for 1997, having correctly noted that 1997 was the true Millennium, since Jesus was born in 3 B.C.. His band of apostles wore turquoise track suits since that colour is the colour of love and wisdom. They intended to save the world from evil by securing the seven power points of this planet. Since we are all still here, they obviously succeeded, and what more proof would a New Age (rhymes with sewage) yuppie need?

One of the seven power points of this planet is Nose Hill Park in Calgary, a 1,000 hectare piece of shortgrass-covered foothill that dominates the northern skyline of the city. Some Calgarians were insulted that a cult would pick this park as a religious shrine, but I think it is rather flattering. Calgary is an insecure city of a million people desperately trying to convince themselves that we are a world-class city, even if most of the world has trouble finding our country on a map, much less Cowtown itself. For an Englishman to travel all the way over here and establish a cult locus to honour one of our parks is quite the compliment.

Since 1997, I hadn't heard too much about the Ickians or whatever they call themselves. But on 2003-11-22, I was driving along 14

Street NW where it forms the eastern boundary of Nose Hill Park. I saw a crude cardboard sign taped to a light pole. "Harmonic Concordance Meditation HERE" it announced, with two Stars of David in the bottom corners. The sign was placed just before the entrance to a road that goes up to the rim of Nose Hill and splits in opposite directions, south to a viewpoint, and north to an abandoned gravel pit now incorporated into the park. The viewpoint is officially called North Haven Viewpoint because the nearest cross road to it is North Haven Drive. Parks workers who have to do garbage detail in the viewpoint parking lot call it Condom Viewpoint, for reasons which I am certain you can guess. -10-

The sign was undoubtedly put up by Ickians. In 1991 they were busy cleansing the hill with New Age ceremonies such as this, and Icke himself was in attendance. Icke even brought out special stones to lay on the hill, which is formed from glacial gravel and already has umpty billion stones. I thought the Ickians had slowly petered out in the absence of the Son of the Spirit of God, as Icke styled himself then, but it seems that a remnant exists. There being 30 cm of snow on the ground, and the usual gale-force wind blowing over the crest of the hill, one must admire their dedication. I didn't see anyone around but there was no time or day marked on the sign, so it may have been for another date. I drove on, secure in the knowledge that someone is guarding our power point, whether we need them to or not.

## **CHEAT THE PROPHET**

G.K. Chesterton, in the opening paragraph of his 1904 novel *THE NAPOLEON OF NOTTING HILL*, writes about a game called 'Cheat the Prophet': *"The players listen very carefully and respectfully to all that the clever men have to say about what is to happen in the next generation. The players then wait until all the clever men are dead, and bury them nicely. They then go and do something else. That is all. For a race of simple tastes, however, it is great fun."*

*"To my mind, it is likely that what we now understand as the mass media will be gone within ten years. Vanished, without a trace."*

Michael Crichton, SF author, in the October 1993 issue of *WIRED* (page 57). Eleven years and counting.

## **A SOLDIER'S VIEWPOINT ON SURVIVING NUCLEAR, CHEMICAL, AND BIOLOGICAL ATTACKS**

by Red Thomas (SFC, ret.)  
Mesa, Arizona

### **Prologue By The Editor**

[Editor's note: This article is copied from the 2003 Jul/Aug issue of *THE THOUGHT* (available for The Usual from Ronald Tobin, Box 10760, Glendale, Arizona 85318)]

[My interest in this article comes from my vocation dealing in pest control and hazmat cleanup, and my avocation as a postal historian. In addition to my university training in pesticide biochemistry when I was studying for my B.Sc. in Horticulture, I also hold Province of Alberta certifications in pesticide application, transport of dangerous goods, and hazmat safety. Many portions of Thomas's article could be used verbatim in pest control courses, since many insecticides are nerve agents. As a postal historian who has published a history of mail bombs, I found the 2001 anthrax letter attack to be an excellent example of what is known as a force multiplier, an attack that has results all out of proportion to the actual physical damage. Only five people died from the anthrax letters (two of them doubtful) but postal systems around the world were disrupted, and had to since install billions of dollars of protective measures. The hysteria forced countless false-alarms by police and fire departments around the world.]

[In reading Thomas's article, I found myself nodding in agreement. I have never served in the military, but I know from my work experience and historical researches that what he has written is very true. He is a calming influence whose information should be more widely propagated, but alas, the mass media do not make any money calming fears or downplaying weapons of mass destruction, so I know this article will never reach the people who need to read it the most.]

## Introduction By The Author.

Since the media have decided to scare everyone with predictions of chemical, biological, or nuclear warfare on our turf, I decided to write a paper and keep things in their proper perspective. I am a retired military weapons, munitions, and training expert.

Lesson number one: In the mid-1990s there were a series of nerve gas attacks on crowded Japanese subway stations. Given perfect conditions for an attack, less than 10% of the people there were injured (the injured were better in a few hours) and only 1% of the injured died.

The television show '60 Minutes' once had a fellow telling us that one drop of nerve gas could kill a thousand people. He didn't tell us the thousand dead people per drop was theoretical. Drill Sergeants exaggerate how terrible this stuff is to keep recruits awake in class. I know this because I was a Drill Sergeant too. Forget everything you've ever seen on TV, in the movies, or read in a novel about this stuff; it was all a lie. (Read that sentence again out loud!) These weapons are about terror. If you remain calm, you probably will not die. This is far less scary than the media and their 'experts' make it sound.

## Chemical Weapons.

Chemical weapons are categorized as nerve, blood, blister, and incapacitating agents. Contrary to the hype of reporters and politicians, they are not weapons of mass destruction. They are 'area denial' and terror weapons that don't destroy anything. When you leave the area you almost always leave the risk. You can leave the area and the risk, but soldiers may have to stay put and sit through it. That's why they need all that spiffy gear.

These are not gasses; they are vapours and/or airborne particles. The agent must be delivered in sufficient quantity to kill or injure, and that defines when and how it is used. Every day we have a morning and evening inversion where things suspended in the air gets pushed down. This inversion is why allergies (pollen) and air pollution are worst at these times of day.

So, a chemical attack will have its best effect an hour or so either side of sunrise/sunset. Also, being vapours and airborne particles, they are heavier than air and will seek low places like ditches, basements, and underground garages. This stuff won't work when it's freezing, it doesn't last when it's hot, and wind spreads it too thin too fast. They've got to get this stuff on you or get you to inhale it for it to work. They also have to get the concentration of chemicals high enough to kill or wound you. Too little and it's nothing; too much and it's wasted. What I hope you've gathered

by this point is that a chemical weapons attack that kills a lot of people is incredibly hard to do with military-grade agents and equipment. You can imagine how hard it will be for terrorists. The more you know about this stuff, the more you realize how hard it is to use.

We'll start by talking about nerve agents. You have these in your house; plain old bug killer like Raid is nerve agent. All nerve agents work the same way. They are cholinesterase inhibitors that mess up the signals your nervous system uses to make your body function. It can harm you if you get it on your skin but it works best if they can get you to inhale it. If you don't die in the first minute and you can leave the area, you're probably going to live. The military's antidote for all nerve agents is atropine and pralidoxime chloride. Neither one of these does anything to cure the nerve agent. They send your body into overdrive to keep you alive for five minutes. After that, the agent is used up. Your best protection is fresh air and staying calm.

Listed as follows are the symptoms for nerve agent poisoning: sudden headache, dimness of vision (pinpointed pupils), runny nose, excessive saliva or drooling, difficulty breathing, tightness in chest, nausea, stomach cramps, twitching of exposed skin where a liquid just got on you.

If you are in public and you start experiencing these symptoms,

first ask yourself if anything out of the ordinary just happened. A loud pop? Did someone spray something on the crowd? Are other people getting sick too? Is there an odour of new-mown hay, green corn, something fruity, or camphor where it shouldn't be? If the answer is yes, then calmly leave the area and head upwind or outside. If you panic, you breathe faster and inhale more air and poison. Fresh air is the best right-now antidote. If you have a blob of liquid on you that looks like molasses or syrup, blot or scrape it off away from you with anything disposable. This stuff works based on your body weight. What a crop duster uses to kill bugs won't hurt you unless you stand there and breathe it in real deep, then lick the residue off the ground for a while. Remember that the enemy has to do all the work. They have to get the concentration up and keep it up for several minutes, while all you have to do is quit getting it on you and quit breathing it, by putting space between you and the attack.

Blood agents are cyanide or arsine, which affect you blood's ability to provide oxygen to your tissue. The scenario for attack would be the same as for nerve agents. Listen for a pop, or look for someone splashing/spraying something and folks around there getting woozy or falling down. The telltale smells are bitter almonds or garlic where it shouldn't be. The symptoms are blue lips, blue under the fingernails, and rapid breathing. The military's antidote is amyl nitride. Just like nerve agent antidote,

it just keeps your body working for five minutes until the toxins are used up. Fresh air is your best individual chance.

Blister agents (distilled mustard) are so nasty that nobody wants to handle it, let alone use it. It is almost impossible to handle safely, and may have delayed effects of up to 12 hours. The attack scenario is also limited to the things you'd see from other chemicals. If you do get large, painful blisters for no apparent reason, don't pop them. If you must, don't let the liquid from the blister get on any other area; the stuff just keeps on spreading. It's just as likely to harm the user as the target. Soap, water, sunshine, and fresh air are this stuff's enemy.

Bottom line on chemical weapons (it's the same if they use industrial chemical spills) is that they are intended to make you panic, to terrorize you, to herd you like sheep to the wolves. If there is an attack, leave the area and go upwind or to the sides of the wind stream. They have to get the stuff to you and on you. Your odds get better if you leave the area. Soap, water, time, and fresh air really deal this stuff a knockout punch. Don't let fear of an isolated attack rule your life. The odds are really on your side.

## **Nuclear Weapons.**

Nuclear bombs are the only weapons of mass destruction on Earth. The effects of a nuclear bomb are heat, blast,

electromagnetic pulse (EMP), and radiation.

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If you see a bright flash of light like the sun where the sun isn't, fall to the ground! The heat will be over in a second. Then there will be two blast waves, one going out and one on its way back. Don't stand up to see what happened after the first wave. Anything that's going to happen will have happened in two full minutes.

These will be low-yield devices and will not level whole cities. If you live through the heat, blast, and initial burst of radiation, you'll probably live for a very, very long time. Radiation will not create 50-foot tall women, or giant ants and grasshoppers the size of tanks. These will be at the most 1-kiloton bombs; that's the equivalent of 1,000 tons of TNT.

Here's the real deal. Flying debris and radiation will kill a lot of exposed (not all!) people within a half mile of the blast. Under perfect conditions this is about a half-mile circle of death and destruction, but when it's done, it's done. EMP will fry every electronic device for a good distance. It is impossible to say what and how far, but probably not over a couple of miles from Ground Zero is a good guess. Cars, cellphones, computers, ABMs, you name it, all will be out of order.

There are lots of kinds of radiation. You only need to worry about three; the others you have lived with for years. You need to worry

about ionizing radiation. These are little subatomic particles that go whizzing along at the speed of light. They hit individual cells in your body, kill the nucleus, and keep going. That's how you get radiation poisoning; you have so many dead cells in your body that the decaying cells poison you.

It's the same as people getting radiation treatments for cancer, only a bigger area gets irradiated. The good news is you don't have to just sit there and take it, and there's lots you can do rather than panic. Your skin will stop alpha particles, and a page of newspaper or your clothing will stop beta particles. You just have to try to avoid inhaling contaminated dust and you'll be generally safe from them.

Gamma rays create the same damage as alpha and beta particles, only they keep going and kill lots of cells as they go all the way through your body. It takes a lot to stop these things, lots of dense material. On the other hand, it takes a lot of this to kill you.

Your defense, as always, is not to panic. Basic hygiene and normal preparation are your friends. All canned or frozen food is safe to eat. The radiation poisoning will not affect plants, so fruits and vegetables are okay if there is no dust on them. Rinse them off if there is. If you don't have running water and you need to collect rainwater or use water from wherever, just let it sit for 30 minutes and gently skim off the water from the top. The dust with

the bad stuff in it will settle. The remaining water can be used for the toilet, which will still work if you have a bucket of water to pour in the tank.

### **Biological Weapons.**

Finally there's biological warfare. There's not much to cover here. Basic personal hygiene and sanitation will take you further than a million doctors. Wash your hands often, and don't share drinks or food, sloppy kisses, etcetera with strangers. Keep your garbage can with a tight lid on it. Don't have standing water like old buckets, ditches, or kiddie pools laying around to allow mosquitoes breeding room. This stuff is carried by vectors, which are insects, rodents, and contaminated material. If biological warfare is so easy as the TV makes it sound, why did Saddam Hussein spend 20 years, and millions and millions of dollars trying to get it right? If you're clean of person and home, you eat well, and are active, you're going to live.

Overall preparation for any terrorist attack is the same as you'd take for a big storm. If you want a gas mask, fine, go get one. I know this stuff and I'm not getting one. I told my Mom not to bother with one either; how's that for confidence? We have a week's worth of cash, several days worth of canned goods, and plenty of soap and water. We don't leave stuff out to attract bugs or rodents, so we don't have them.

**In Conclusion.**

Terrorists can't conceive a nation like the USA that is big with so many resources. These weapons are made to cause panic, terror, and to demoralize. If we don't run around like sheep, they won't use this stuff after they find out it's no fun. The government is going nuts over this stuff because they have to protect every inch of the country. You only have to protect yourself, and by doing that, you help the country. Finally, there are millions of caveats to everything I wrote here, and you can think up specific scenarios where my advice isn't the best. This article is supposed to help the greatest number of people under the greatest number of situations. This is how we the people can rob those people of their most desired goal, your terror.

**Epilogue By The Editor.**

[After the anthrax letters hit the headlines, panic spread worldwide, and Canadians were just as panicky as anyone else. For decades, magazine printers had been using corn starch powder to keep pages from sticking, and no one noticed. But after numerous people called out firefighters and police for a bit of white powder in the latest issue of a fashion magazine, publishers had to discontinue the powder.]

[ In my hometown of Calgary, which I doubt any Islamic terrorist could find on the map without consulting a gazetteer, the slightest whiff of powder triggered panic. A careless janitor spilled soap powder in a City Hall washroom, so the building was evacuated, and the hazmat squad was called out. As a Parks Trouble Calls Supervisor, I got a call for white powder in a suburban park. I asked the lady if there was a soccer field adjacent. She said yes. I asked her if the lines on the field were laid down with lime. She hesitated, then tried to save face by saying the powder was in a pile off to one side. I pointed out that the soccer club volunteer who did the lines undoubtedly spilled a bit of lime while emptying the bag into the spreader. End of conversation. What I really wanted to ask her was why she thought an Islamic terrorist would come out to an obscure city, drive out to a neighbourhood park in an equally obscure suburb, and dump some anthrax in a tiny pile next to her house. But we must always be polite to citizens, even if they are wasting our time.]

[Remember that the product of the news media is not news, it is readers and listeners. The more readers/listeners, then the greater advertising revenues are. That is why anthrax letters always beat out an announcement that crime is declining. Good news doesn't sell ads.]