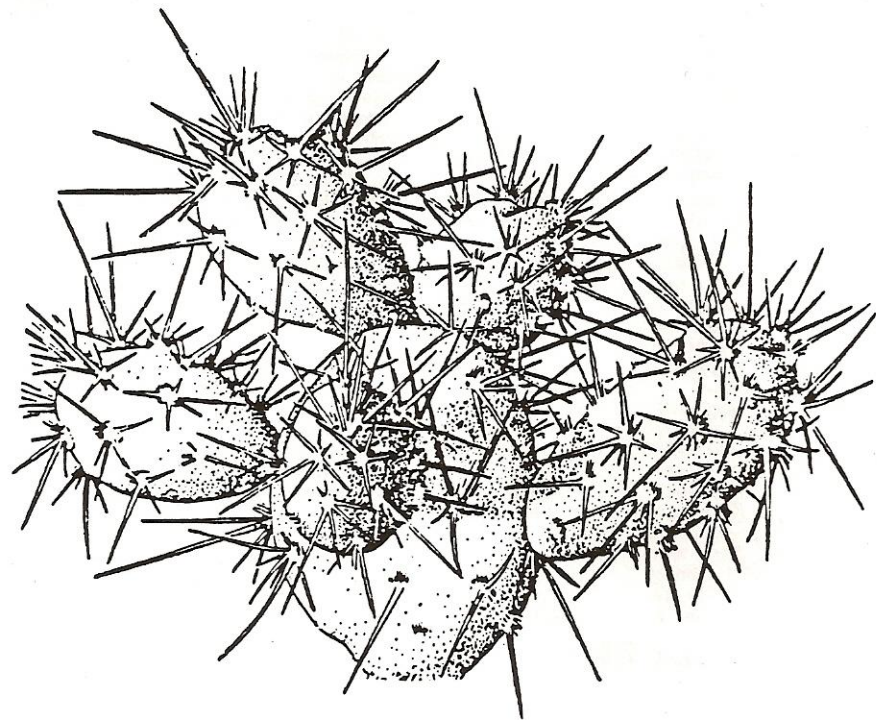


# OPUNTIA

## 15



OPUNTIA #15

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

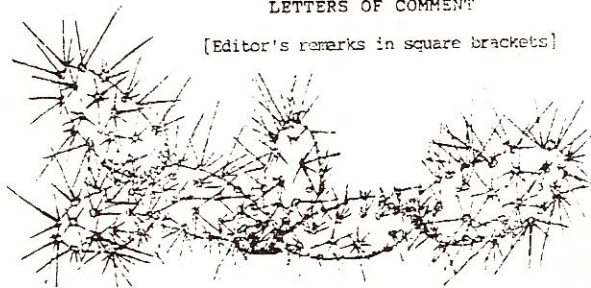
ART CREDIT: The cover depicts Opuntia fragilis, drawn by Jeanne Russell Janish.

EDITORIAL: Progress Report #4 of ConAdian is now out. As the 1994 Labour Day weekend draws near, the pace picks up. Bruce Farr advises that Program Participant recruitment begins after ConFrancisco; you can reach him at Box 27201, Tempe, Arizona 85285. Kees Van Toorn is European agent. Winnipeg is a highly ethnic city, especially Ukrainian, so visitors from Europe may be able to attend ConAdian on the cheap by staying in homes in exchange for news and talks of the Old Country. An article about Fan GoH Robert Runté by Christine Kulyk, and in turn the two of them have another article on Canadian SF. Membership is at 2826, of whom 2337 are American, 356 Canadian, and the rest overseas, including one unfortunate soul from Lost. Hotel information will be out with the next P.R.. Until December 31, 1993, memberships are US\$95/C\$125 attending, US\$25/C\$30 supporting, and US\$30/C\$35 children (12 and under as at first day of con). Address of Worldcon 1994 is Box 2430, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4A7.

I've had my membership for some time, and hope to attend. It might be close though; the roof needs reshingling, an expense I can afford if no other big hits on my budget. Ominously though, the City of Calgary is planning cuts and I might end up on the poge.

## LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



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

1993-8-9

Your publication is gaining recognition of Garth Spencer's long devotion to the history of Canadian fandom. Perhaps a book can someday be compiled on the basis of his articles. John Robert Colombo's YEARS OF LIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF LESLIE A. CROUCH is the only book known to me concerning Canadian fandom. Do your readers know of any others?

[In 1989, Sam Moskowitz did a book about Canada's first fanzine publisher, Nils Helmer Frome, who lived in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. It was Monograph #5 of the Moshassuck Press, Glenview, Illinois. It was misleadingly titled HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT AND NILS HELMER FROME: A RECOLLECTION OF ONE OF CANADA'S EARLIEST SCIENCE FICTION FANS. The two men had exchanged a few letters, and the H.P.L. connection was used to sell more copies of the book, even though it dealt almost entirely with Frome.]

OM: Lloyd Penney  
412 - 4 Lisa Street  
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6

1993-7-13

time goes by, OPUNTIA's gather in the moonlight to mate and spawn. Eventually they swim back up the congested stal streams to return from whence the comments came. continue the cycle, the loccers make comments that form re OPUNTIA's, and send them downstream where together they add to form a fully-grown fanzine that grow to spawn and start the cycle again. For more information on the UNTIA, write to the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa.

his will be funnier to my Canadian readers, so I'll explain to my American and overseas readers that Lloyd is producing a series of television commercials that every Canadian grew up with. The C.W.S. runs these brief life cycle stories about the loon, the beaver, the moose, etc. and always finishes them up "For more information ..."]

little more for Dave Panchyk's Saskatchewan fanhistory. o Toronto fans, Les and Ellen Dickson (Les was a past Astra chairman), moved to Saskatchewan in 1989 (I ink), and settled in Saskatoon. They didn't find much nac there but they did attend Combine 0. Not long after they moved there, I received a letter from two young Trek-n in Saskatoon, asking me as a member of the Star Trek lcommittee if there were any fans they could contact their town. I gave them Les and Ellen's name and telno.

took them a year to actually contact them but they did d now there are two busy Trek clubs called The Undiscovered Province and the U.S.S. Legend. They've also started a Trekcon, which may have been the first Northern airie Con. After Panchyk left, Les and Ellen became the nior fans there.

ease ask the XENOFILERS folks in Calgary to send issues, d I'll write in with locs. I would also like to see Ron rrie's last issue of the original XENOFILER. I talked

to him on the phone some time ago, and he told me nearly the entire print run of XENOFILER 10 is in a box, and has been there since his move to Vancouver.

[I don't have Currie's address but the present editor of XENOFILER can be reached at #D5, 223 - 12 Avenue SW, Calgary, T2R 0G9. I should emphasize that I have no connection with Calgary fen. I attend Conversion out of hometown loyalty but am not otherwise a congoer, and do not know these people or ever see them. Indeed, I suspect that it is mutual and most of them have no idea that OPUNTIA exists.]

1993-9-6

The quote from the Hamilton aquarium bulletin is quite interesting. The writer of this quote understands the Trekfen's situation better than most SF fen. No one, no matter their interest, wants to be ridiculed in print or in broadcast. The columnist mentioned is Rosie diManno of the TORONTO STAR, and her coverage of the local Trekcon last year was a travesty. She prejudged and trashed the people she was to write about, which, I gather, is typical of her writing style. Given that most papers promote the idea that anyone interested in SF is a Trekkie, I send out only a few notices to the local press for Ad Astra.

This past spring, Hugh Spencer and Barbara Soren arrived at one of our Ad Astra committee meetings, saying they were setting up a display of Canadian SF at the National Library in Ottawa. They asked us what we'd like to see in the display. We gave them plenty of ideas and asked them to keep in touch. They never did, and I haven't heard anything further from them. Spencer never mentioned anything about a bibliography. I gather from the attitudes expressed by various people in the local SF literary pro community that fandom as a whole is part of the lunatic fringe, and are not to



be included in any projects like this one. Both fandom and the pros do what each does out of love for the literature, but the pros continue to forget that.

The history of the Caspers ... Ad Astra 7/Convention 7: I was not the ballot administrator at this convention, Mary Meredith was. However, I did gather the 1000+ names by finding them through older Canadian fanzines. Our fledgling attempt to operate a national convention seems quite successful to hear Garth describe it, yet he was not impressed with us, and dismissed us because he wasn't getting much information out of us. There wasn't a lot of information to give out to him, and perhaps he wasn't satisfied with what he received. None of the Ad Astra committee was in BCAPA at the time, so we certainly couldn't read Garth's criticisms.

FROM: Rodney Leighton  
RR3  
Pugwash, Nova Scotia BOK ILO

The article by Robert Runté was quite interesting. I was especially intrigued by the statement: "Indeed, unless one is prepared to include things like 'getting laid' in the convention's goal statements ...". This is the fourth or fifth time I have seen a statement which leads one to suspect that more or less indiscriminate screwing is part of SF cons. I'm kind of curious. Not personally; I couldn't afford to attend a con if it was held in the old grainery across the road, and shyness would keep me away in any case. Besides, I'm close to celibate. However, as a matter of interest, do groupies show up, like at rock concerts and sports events? Or are ~~femefen~~ particularly uninhibited gals? Or is it that ~~femefen~~ are ugly dogs who are well known to screw any guy who's willing? Or is it a case of, like, "Hey, you turn me on, we may well never see one another again, let's fuck" sort of thing? And if so, what effect has all this AIDS and other sex-related disease scares had on such activities?

[Undoubtedly there is a bit of whoopie going on at SF cons, much the same as at a Shriner's or aquarium con. More than a few marriages have either been made or destroyed at cons. Much of such talk, I suspect, is from spotty teenaged boys who haven't got a hope.]

FROM: Paula Johanson  
Box 7 Site 1 RR 1  
Legal, Alberta TOG ILO

1993-8-4

I enjoyed ConVersion also. Had a great conversation with the Associate Editor of a magazine by and for strippers (glossy 4-colour photos, lots of ads, spiffy magazine available by sub. only to exotic dancers). Shocked Robert Runté when he saw me reading it. "But I'm trying to find out if they want any free-lance articles ... really! There's one here on the connection between modern exotic dancers and Victorian tableaux" ... he didn't get it.

I also heard the single worst pickup line ever. You don't grow up female and with two eyes in a face without getting hit on lots of times. My friends who are more and less culturally attractive all report that men will try to pick them up in church, at their kid's schools, at their wedding anniversary parties ... But I was going to tell you about the worst pickup line ever. Sally and I checked out the Hospitality Suite and returned to the elevator. A young guy followed us, saying "Isn't it a nice day? It's the first time I've been out since I shot myself in the head. See, that's why my eye droops a bit." Sally gulped and said he was looking well. He nodded at me and I said he was talking well. "Oh, I had no problems there, I jutht loht a pieth of my tongue, thee?" The elevator arrived. Sally and I left. We all said goodbye.

[Does that answer your question, Rodney?]

FROM: Garth Spencer  
Box 15335  
Vancouver, British Columbia

1993-8-2

V6B 5B1

John Mansfield's comment on why Canadian fans cannot take the awards seriously misses a couple of points. One is the distinction between awards for SF and fantasy versus fanish activities. This distinction seems to be one of the problems besetting the Ditmars (Australian SF awards). The Ditmars bring recognition to Australian SF and its writers; to that extent they're embarrassed by the fanish award categories. I think a different outcome arises from the same distinction in the case of the Auroras. If the Aurora award categories for Canadian SF mean something now (and I think they do; we now acknowledge the breadth of Canadian SF being published these days), the fan category awards go randomly to whomever or whatever the voting fans chance to hear about. At least publishers and distributors make some effort to advertise book releases. Fans and their works, however, have no one doing PR for them. Consequently the fan voters most likely only hear of fans in their local fan group, or in their particular line of interest.

In any case, I don't think the fans in Canada know much about Convention, the Auroras, or the CSFFA. Someone has to advertise the existence of the award, disseminate book reviews, make the names of the nominees familiar. Whose job is it? Who can spare the manhours? Same thing goes for CUFF.

FROM: Dave Panchyk  
Edmonton, Alberta

1993-8-31

There is a small inaccuracy in John Mansfield's letter. I did not win the Aurora for Fan Achievement (Organizational) because Combine 0 was the best con of 1990. I won it because of the way in which I integrated it with a mainstream literary convention which paid most of our bills.

By the same token, had John Mansfield, the runner-up, won the award, he would have won for his WorldCon bid (which had not yet won because voting hadn't taken place). He would not have won because the 1994 WorldCon was the best con in 1990.

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

1993-8-13

It does help to know "It's been tried and doesn't work" as long as you have a clear idea of what it was and why it didn't work. This in turn suggests that fan-histories with some detail are desirable, both to prevent the repetition of historic failures and to prevent the forestalling of potential good, or new anyway, ideas that have the misfortune of vaguely resembling ancient disasters.

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

1993-7-31

I must strongly disagree with Robert Runté in regard to the need for a convention manual. All too often many of a concom gaffiate or move away, and leave little or no information behind from which to work, and are certainly not willing or available to pass down their wisdom. Others are simply not able of organizing a thing, and in one of the miracles of fandom actually manage to pull something decent off at the last minute. In either case the next person in line for a particular department has nothing to go on except past experience. This is usually not very fun. I feel it is one of the important duties of the convention chair to compile such a reference manual.

[continued next page]

First and foremost, a convention manual should not be a smothering tome describing the only way to do things. This just turns running a con into a boring and repetitive exercise and serves only to extinguish originality. However, the manual should contain a decent paper trail of past expenses, advertising suggestions, supply lists, sample correspondence, contacts, useful time frames, past attendance, etc.. These are all the things that help to take guesswork out of running the next con. The part I find so infuriating is that it only requires the treasurer file a decent report, that anyone sending out correspondence on behalf of the con cc. to the con chair, and that each department write a short report after the con is over.

To illustrate this, I refer to my experiences with the last X-Con. I was in charge of the consuite and was given as my sole piece of reference a copy of the beverage order (not usage) for the last convention. Even with direct access to my predecessor of 5+ years, I was still unable to extract any useful information regarding how much soda we actually used, much less anything about cups or chips. I managed fine by using my brain, but certainly would have been more confident going in if I'd had some decent documentation from any one of the previous years. Needless to say, the next consuite chair will have something useful to work from.

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

1993-8-8

You seem to have had a reasonably good time at ConVersion. I wonder who is the fan who first dreamed up a name for a con that includes a capital letter somewhere in the body of the word, requiring keyboard users to press the shift key without first pressing the space bar, setting up nobody knows how many inhibitions?

[Can anyone advise which was the first con to use WeIrd

CapItalIzation schemes? Also, I'll throw in a request here for a checklist of early Canadian cons. When and where was the first Canadian con? If any readers have a list of, say the first couple of decades, of Canadian cons, I would like to publish it.]

I enjoyed the latest excavation of Canadian fanhistory by Garth Spencer. Besides its inherent interest, its subject matter should be an object lesson to all of us that any sort of awards for achievement, large or small will suffer all sorts of problems and controversy. The Hugos haven't had to cope yet with the two-language circumstances that exist for the Canadian awards.

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

1993-8-11

There is the press, and there is the press. Juanita and I have been interviewed frequently, mostly as SF writers but also as book collectors. Juanita had one interview from the Marion, Indiana, newspaper as a collector of disaster books. I never saw the results of the TV interview done in West Virginia, but the ones from Indianapolis, Louisville, and Columbus stations were fair enough. (The Columbus interview was radio, and strictly Lois Bujold and Juanita.) Various small-town newspaper interviews were well handled. Interviewers at conventions seem to concentrate on costumes and huckster material, the showy items. Which is fair enough, I suppose; TV lives for spectacles. The small-town press may be more careful because their subscribers pay more attention to local affairs and people and they don't want to offend anyone; it's less dependent on scandal. I got interviewed by the Marion newspaper just because I sent all my letters of comment to them on postcards. But the press, as a whole, is no worse than SF fandom as a whole.

[continued next page]



We were at Rivercon in Louisville. One bit of fannish news we got from Bruce Pelz is that there will be a book about fandom in the 1960s, bankrolled by LASFS. No editor named; so far Pelz and Dick Lynch are working together.

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

1993-8-9

I was struck by your response to Andrew Murdoch in OPUNTIA 14 that "primitive hunting/gathering societies have more leisure time than we do; hunters only work a few hours a day". This is quite true, but why call hunter-gatherer societies primitive when they can be as culturally rich as our own? Calling them primitive strikes me as a false value judgement about them, supposedly to highlight how much more advanced and sophisticated our own society is in comparison. Yet labelling our society 'more sophisticated' is equally judgemental. There's nothing to suggest that either form of social organization is inherently better than the other. Instead these two different types of economy would be more accurately described as simple and complex, respectively, terms which smack less of an a priori value judgement.

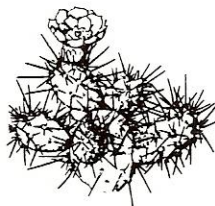
It seems to me that the reason we call hunter-gatherer societies primitive is that we have been led astray by late Victorian metaphors of evolution as a form of progress which leads inexorably from 'lower', meaning less organised, forms to 'higher', meaning more organized, ones. Yet, as Stephen Jay Gould and others have argued, there's nothing directive about evolution, nothing to suggest that intelligence and self-awareness confer a necessary advantage, or that if the tape of history were rewound to the start, the human species would be the inevitable end-product. The same is true of the forms of social organization that we have developed over the past few millennia. If we rewound the tape of history to the hunter-gatherer phase, its replay would not necessarily result in the

information-based service economies we have today.

I don't abide by Marxist conceptions of the iron laws of history, etc.. The idea of 'history from below', of broad social masses rather than individual leaders, need not involve arguments about inevitably or immutably.

[I consider hunter-gatherer tribes primitive because they lead short, nasty lives compared with us, are more likely to suffer disease, and, most important of all, are illiterate and have no way of preserving their history. Oral tradition dies with the language, but inscriptions can be deciphered thousands of years on. While our cultures have problems with pollution, we still have a better life than primitive tribes.]

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Andrew Murdoch



## THE CANADIAN SF & FANTASY AWARDS (Part III)

by Garth Spencer

### About CUFF

This might be a good place to explain the Canadian Unity Fan Fund, which Mike Wallis proposed reviving in 1987.

As I had described fan funds in 1984:

In the beginning, fandom was so many SF fans who wrote letters to magazines, put out fanzines, corresponded and traded (fanzines). But their images of each other were without form and void. When conventions were invented, someone said, 'Hey, let's invite Joe Bigname so we can see his face!' And it was done. But some Big Name Fans dwelt in the uttermost parts of the earth, or at least across a major ocean, and being normal human beings, tended to lack sufficient funds for long-distance travel.

That, apparently, is how fan funds started ...  
(*MLR* #6, May 1984)

Most fan funds, like the Trans-Atlantic, Down Under and Get-Up-and-over-Fan Fund, conduct mail auctions of fannish memorabilia and manage accounts at each end of the itinerary. It took a while to arrange this for CUFF. Taral Wayne wrote in mid-1984 that

CUFF was really Bob Webber's idea, and he fronted the money through OSFiC. ... I kind of like the idea of CUFF, but there was a problem in working out the trips. The first (and only) fund brought Mike Hall from Edmonton to Toronto. ... Sending the winner to a national convention might have been workable, but do we have one of those? Even the so-called Convention wasn't a national convention, other than in name. The attendance was still the same ... and travel from across the country had been very little encouraged.

(*MLR* 7)

Robert Runté concurred: "Nothing ever happened after Mike Hall got \$50 (to attend a relaxicon in Toronto). He is the one and only recipient" (up to 1984).

In October 1987 I published the last issue of *MLR* and moved to Vancouver. From this point, coverage of the CSFFAs passes to Michael Skeet's newszine, *MLR*, and thence to *XenoFile*.

Fran Skene indicated in *MLR* 4 (Mar-Apr 88) that Taral Wayne of Toronto won the 87/88 CUFF race by acclamation, and would attend Convention 88 at Keycon. That issue also reported that no bids for the next Convention had appeared, and with the number of potential Eastern hosting cons way down, PineKone (a new Ottawa con, in its second year) and Wilfcon (a one-day con in Kitchener) were the remaining choices.



MLR 6 (June 88) reported that the Casper winners at Keycon 5/Convention 8 were Charles de Lint's *Jack the Giant Killer* (Best English work), Alain Bergeron's *Les crabes de Venus* (Best French work), and MLR (Michael Skeet ed.) for Best Fan Achievement. Changes to the CSFFA Constitution at Keycon introduced more award categories.

MLR 7 reported that the Keycon committee kept failing to supply the zine with voting figures. It was only established much later that the local Canada Post outlet was persistently losing the mail going to or from the Keycon mailing address. The July/August CSFFA constitution was published in that issue.

As eastern administrator of the award in 1988, Taral subsequently took the initiative to work up a CUFF newsletter, which accompanied Michael Skeet's newszine MLR and proposed some fundraising projects and rules.

It would seem to be a good idea to have at least one alternative to going hat in hand to Maplecon, V-Con, or Ad Astra. One idea I find attractive was pioneered by TAFF. The 1985 winners administered the awards in the following year, and they raised a sizable portion of 1986 needs by conducting a mail-auction. ...

The bulk of (this) issue will naturally consist of the list of auction items, the bids received by mail, and the rules of the auction. ...

I would like to especially thank Paul Taylor, whose generous gift of \$50 to CUFF saved the concom carpet ... Thanks also to Alan Rosenthal, who contributed an extra \$10.

(CUFF-Link 1, July 88)

Taral reported on Convention 8/Keycon 5 (1988):

As CUFF winner '88, I'd like to go on record as saying I had a fine time at the Winnipeg Convention, Keycon. Don Bindas and the crew did well in making me feel welcome, in spite of my last minute addition to their plans. There was, however, room for improvement. In a way, the entire Convention was a transplant, like another arm, on the con. The award ceremonies conflicted with regular Keycon programming, and came out much the loser. Rather than creating a conflict with regular programming, the Convention should be very much the starting point and center of the host convention's program. Similarly, the CUFF winner ought to play an important role along with the con's other guests.

Not knowing what to expect, more to the point what was expected of me, when I won CUFF, I wrote a speech. I sent a copy of it to Don with a note saying the speech was just in case. If it didn't fit his plans, he might pass it on to the Winnipeg clubzine. I gather this didn't fit anyone's plans either, so the ms. was given to another fanzine editor. This didn't fit his plans either ... At the moment the ms. is in the hands of Lorna (Toolis) and Michael (Skeet), and should appear in an issue of one of their fanzines at some future date.

This is no skin off my nose ... But I'd like to see a tradition begin, of the CUFF winner writing a short piece for the Convention which will also serve as his trip report.

(CUFF-Link 1, July 88)

## The "Who Is Len Wong and Why Is He Saying These Terrible Things?" Episode

Len Wong of Vancouver alleged in 1988 that he had been unfairly ruled out of consideration as a CUFF nominee in 1987. (It is helpful to know that Len Wong had spent several years heavily involved in comics fandom in Vancouver, while there was a Vancouver Comic Books Club, and organizes comics conventions in Vancouver to this day.) Apparently all this arose out of some persistent poor impressions Len and BCSFA members have of each other.

I confess I was surprised that enough *Eastern SF* fans had heard of comics fan Len Wong to support his CUFF candidacy. I was less surprised at the attitudes that resulted:

On 15 September, Leonard S Wong was a guest on the Vancouver Public Radio program 'Ether Patrol'. While being interviewed by hosts Michael Dean and Stuart Rolland, Wong alleged that, although he had qualified for the '87 CUFF race, he was not allowed to run ... and in fact no race took place, the administrators announcing that no candidates had qualified.

In support of his allegations, Wong quoted from material leaked to him from CASPERAPA, a private apa for those involved with the Canadian national SF convention (Convention). He had Rolland read excerpts from a letter by Fran Skene to the effect that *'this individual did have enough nominations and no one is accusing [the Toronto Convention] committee of being unfair in this regard [the nomination process] ... I was the one who phoned Mike [Wallis] to tell him about the concerns of various people in BCSFA about this candidate, who specializes in minor vandalism among*

*other charming acts, at every con he attends. His 'winning' CUFF would have caused it to die then and there.'*

Though Wong isn't mentioned in the excerpts, subsequent discussion between himself and the radio hosts leaves little doubt that Wong considers himself to be the disqualified candidate.

Most of the interview was devoted to Wong's discussion of a long-standing problem he has had with the people who run V-Con. Wong said, 'At this point in time I really don't care about the trip to Toronto. What scares me more is the fact that they're telling stories about me to people who don't know who I am.'

The program ended with Dean and Rolland inviting comment from representatives of V-Con or BCSFA. (*MLR* 8, Sept/Oct 88)

The preceding paragraph is interesting, as I have a story from Steve Forty that, when he tried to tell the "Ether Patrol" a different story, he was not let on the air.

Evidently Len *was* known to enough Casper nominators, in both East and West, to be a candidate. However, Wong was blamed (among BCSFAns) for incidents such as getting minors drunk at Vancouver Comic Book Club room parties, or trying to light a hibachi barbecue on the minuscule balconies attached to Gage Residence dormitory rooms (for any of which reasons the Conference Centre might have ejected the convention). I say "blamed" because, after making some inquiries, I have determined only *one* altercation certainly involved Len at all; yet *simply because these stories were credible to people*, Len was in a false position.

So was BCSFA. It looked to Len like BCSFA was persecuting him, when BCSFAns were in fact concerned not to be thrown out of their site.

It is impossible now to establish the facts among these allegations. Whoever was vandalizing and harassing V-Cons, neither party got beyond name-calling, and found the hooligan. The parties did not resolve anything. This sort of situation happens repeatedly.

A second edition of *CUFF-Link* appeared in October 1988, reporting the response to *CUFF-Link* #1 (\$75) and listing 28 items, including fanzines, art, manuscripts and comics. Taral added:

... A peculiar correspondence appeared in my mail box a couple of days back, purporting to be a transcript of a radio interview with a fan who claims to have been the legitimate winner of CUFF the year before. He further claims to have been deprived of his rightful CUFF trip by a conspiracy. The mind boggles at the idea of a Casper-gate. Personally, I know nothing. I don't even own a paper-shredder. And except for the conspiracy against him, I doubt I would have ever heard of Leonard S Wong. Do I dare suggest that anonymity could itself be a legitimate reason to disqualify a CUFF candidate?

In considering how similar situations concerning fan fund candidates should be handled in future, Michael Skeet's editorial position in *MLR* 8 might be *à propos*:

... When the bottom line is reached, I support the decision of the 1987 CUFF administrators to deny

(Wong's) candidacy. It has nothing to do with Wong's rep, or who he's fighting with. CUFF had never heard anything about him, and that's sufficient for disqualification in my books.

But Wong does have a case. I may think it was all right for CUFF to deny his candidacy. But I do not think it was all right to do so without having first informed him that this could happen. However he went about getting nominated, Wong did so in the belief that he was playing according to the rules. It was unfair to tell him after the fact that those rules had a few addenda he wasn't aware of.

For a completely contrasting case, consider the 1989 CUFF race (from West to East), when the nominees were Steve Forty and Robert Runté. The winner was Robert Runté, due perhaps to the fact that Steve Forty was campaigning for him.

### The Right Way

*MLR* 10 included a massive number of novel, short story and fanzine reviews — the first (perhaps the only) attempt on this scale to *inform Casper voters about the potential nominees for the next award*. This was the first time fans had been so informed, and the reason why became apparent: Michael Skeet found out the hard way that this was an Herculean task for one person.

*MLR* 12 reported an apparent attempt at bloc voting in the Caspers. *MLR* 13 carried more CUFF news, including the low voter turnout.



Taral Wayne produced a small zine, *CUFF-Link 3*, at first sight a listing of salable material, the proceeds of which would go to CUFF. Mike Glicksohn wrote in *MLR* 12:

*CUFF-Link 3* was a droll delight that may well be overlooked by some (or even a majority?) of *MLR* readers who will assume that it is merely another list of fannish and sfnal stuff they're not interested in. If there's a sub-fandom that Taral hasn't lampooned here it can only be Gor-fandom, and I'm not sure such a thing exists any longer. Good sarcastic slash and bash humour that I enjoyed enormously!

I missed something here. Taral had to tell me, years later, that the auction items listed in *CUFF-Link 3* were entirely fictitious. What made this hoax delicious is that, apparently, no-one else was paying attention either. I guess that was the point.

### Convention 9/PineKone II

PineKone II had surfaced as a bid for the 1989 Convention even before PineKone I was held, and became the Convention winner. As several out-of-towners heard about it, the PineKone bid won on the strength of Paul Valcour's presentation at Keycon. Jean-Louis Trudel wrote later (in *Xenofile* 1:6) that in fact,

the bid papers were partly, if not entirely, the work of Joseph Casey, Andrew Farmer, and Sian Reid. As a member of the CASPER Awards subcommittee, I can state that I was first approached by Joseph Casey. The bid papers themselves included the names of the subcommittee members: Marjorie McKenna, Madona Skaff, and myself.

This con committee compiled a very extensive list of eligible works for the CSFFA nomination ballot.

PineKone II/Convention 9 took place Oct. 13-15, 1989 at the Skyline Hotel. The winners of the 1989 Casper Awards were:

Best Long-Form Work in English: William Gibson, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*

Best Short-Form Work in English: Candace Jane Dorsey, "Sleeping in a box", from *Machine Sex and Other Stories*

Best Work in English (Other): Gerry Truscott, editor, Porcépic/Tesseract Books

Meilleur Livre en français: Esther Rochon, *Le Traversier*, Le Préambule

Meilleur Nouvelle en français: Joel Champetier, "Survie sur Mars", *L'Année de la SF et du F Québécois* 1987, Le Passeur

Meilleure Ouvrage (autre): Luc Pomerleau, *Solaris* #77-81

Fan Achievement/Activité Fanique (organizational): Paul Valcour, PineKone I Treasurer and Chair, Steering Committee

Fan Achievement/Activité Fanique (fanzine): Michael Skeet, *MLR* editor

Fan Achievement/Activité Fanique (other): Robert Runté, *NCF Guide to Canadian Science Fiction and Fandom*, 3rd ed.

The name of the CSFFA Awards was changed to "the Auroras" at the Business Meeting at PineKone II/Convention 9.

Robert Runté wrote of PineKone II/Convention 9:

Somewhat to my surprise, Easterners actually attend the opening ceremonies at their conventions. There were easily 60 people listening to speeches by the Guests of Honour explaining how glad they were to be there. This all seemed rather redundant ... When eventually called upon to speak myself, however, I provided a brief explanation of the function of CUFF. To wit (sic): that I was the one fan Westerners were most anxious to ship east, presumably because they had not understood that it was intended as a round trip. This seemed to be well received, and I sat down again ...

... The artshow was quite good, and while there were a number of familiar prints and the usual assortment of dragons and spaceships, at least most of the artists were new to me. I think a number of eastern artists could do quite well at conventions in the West and vice versa, simply because they would be reaching new audiences. David Cherry's work also helped to raise the tone of the artshow ...

The dealers' room, while small, had some interesting displays. There was one of the best tables of Lovecraft, *Weird Tales* and so on that I've ever seen, though I'm not into such things myself. The second dealers' room was for fan stuff, where I picked up a subscription to the *Ottawa Statement* and various back issues.

Somewhat to my surprise, I was invited to the banquet and seated next to Michael Skeet at the head table. I thought the food rather better than typical for such functions, and enjoyed the usual upbeat, congratulatory banquet speeches. ... Realizing somewhat belatedly that I would probably be called

upon to speak, I wrote a few notes on the general theme of 'Fandom Is a Family' and awaited my turn. I was somewhat dismayed to hear Michael give his speech on the theme 'Fandom Is a Family' a couple of minutes ahead of me, and so switched to a few brief comments on 'The Purpose of CUFF.' I was therefore definitely dismayed to hear the MC explaining 'The Purpose of CUFF' as he introduced me. I ended up extemporizing something on the 'Ecology of Fandom' theme. ... (*I'm Not Boring You Am I?* #7, fall 1989)

### Rush to Judgement

It developed after Pinecone II that the 1989 Convention had taken a four-figure loss, like Pinecone I, and as before it was absorbed by Paul Valcour (the treasurer). *MLR* and other sources reported at that time that other Eastern conventions felt unready to shoulder Convention.

The general impression gained by out-of-town fans, spurred by editorial pieces in Robert Runté's trip report, in *MLR* and in *Xenofile*, was that Pinecone had twice gotten into financial trouble, and Paul Valcour was left holding the bag, both times. *MLR* 14 carried an editorial and article on Pinecone II/Convention 9, as did *XenoFile* 1:6, Runté's personalzine, and *BCSFazine*.

It took a while for the *Ottawa SF Statement* to report on this controversy. They maintained rather stiffly that it was Valcour who had maintained policy measures which ran the cons into the red.

It seemed to be agreed later that one of Pinecone's problems was shared by other Ottawa cons that year — there were rather many cons, scheduled rather closely together. I'm not sure what, if anything, we learned from this episode.

As Robert Runté saw it,

Some of the behind-the-scene operations of eastern conventions strike me as very bizarre, particularly in the way they are financed. I'm still a little vague on some of the details, but I take it that wealthy conventions invest in smaller ones as a sort of corporate diversification strategy. And I was amazed at the size of the personal financial losses individuals (called 'patrons') were prepared to accept as a routine element of running a con. I mean, sure, any con can miscalculate and lose money, and it's great when people chip in to bail them out (as happened with ConText '89), but it seemed to me that some of the patrons went in *knowing* they were going to lose *thousands* of dollars. This is nuts.

I was shocked, for example, to discover that some attendees still expected us to receive a slick post-con publication, even though they knew the con was already in debt and that the \$2500+ required would have to come out of the personal finances of one or more committee members. While I certainly understand the disappointment of contributors when a publication which has accepted their submissions fails to materialize, the best laid plans of mice and men oft go astray (sic), and maturity is learning to cope with these little disappointments. For every zine that fails, there are another ten to which material can be submitted. Yet I watched several people give Paul a hard time over the cancellation of this project. I was not impressed.

(*I'm Not Boring You Am I?* #7, fall 1989)

A surprisingly unimpassioned article appeared from Paul Valcour in *Con News* (Jul/Aug 90):

Lots has been happening. Our convention, Pinecone II/Convention 9 took place over the October 13-15th weekend last year in Ottawa, Ontario. It was a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde affair.

The Canadian National SF Convention portion of the con was perhaps the best ever seen in its history. The con established an all time record for Casper Awards nominations (68 valid ballots received) and votes (98 valid ballots received). By comparison, the previous year's national convention in Winnipeg, Manitoba had approximately 15 nominations and 40 voting ballots received (admittedly low by Canadian standards). The Casper Awards ceremony was held during a banquet at the top of the Skyline Hotel, Saturday evening, October 14th. It was very smoothly and professionally pulled off. The Toastmaster was local fan artist, Larry "The Doctor" Stewart and the awards were ably presented by the 1989 Casper Awards Subcommittee members: Marjorie McKenna (chairman), Jean-Louis Trudel and Madona Skaff ....

I might as well admit it. I won one of the bloody awards. (You asked me for news!) Last year was the first year Convention expanded the awards to nine categories. It had been three prior to 1989. Convention's programming, though not spectacular, was notably more focused on Canadian SF writing, history and fanzines. It also accommodated the second meeting of the newly formed Canadian professional SF writers group called SWAC: the Speculative Writers' Association of Canada. The association had



formed in a landmark meeting of professionals at the critically-acclaimed, Edmonton-based (sercon) Con-Text '89 earlier that summer in July. The down side to Pinekone II/Convention was the local portion of the con. The organizing committee had broken down in chaos; attendance was disastrously lower than expected (despite the excellent guests of Greg Bear, Raymond E. Feist, David A. Cherry and Judith Merrill); internal con com bickering dampened the atmosphere of the con's festivities; and Pinekone lost a lot of money. The con (*that's Pinekone*) is officially dead now. It is noteworthy that creditors have been paid.

It is gratifying to see the fundraising activities across the country to help alleviate the financial burden (of debt). Fan organizations in Vancouver, Calgary, Waterloo and Montreal have been (or are) organizing auctions. Two Toronto cons have generously given monetary concessions in my dealings with them. ...

## CUFF

The Canadian Unity Fan Fund (CUFF) is Canada's equivalent to TAFF and DUFF. Its objective is to encourage East-West fan relationships within our country (It's a BIG country).

I'm beginning to get a little embarrassed here. Ahem; I won that too this year. How lucky can a guy get?

... Robert Runté of Edmonton ... had won CUFF last year and had been our guest at Pinekone II/Convention 9 in Ottawa. By comparison, the 54

votes cast is a marked improvement over last year's 20. But, to be fair, Robert's competitor (and friend), Steve Forty (of Vancouver) threw the race by publicly encouraging fen to vote for Robert because he (Steve) would likely be able to afford to go anyway, which he did.

The CUFF voting ballot briefly described my and Keith Soltys' reasons for wanting to go to Calgary's Con-Version VII/Convention 10. The ballot also lists our nominators. CUFF requires 6 nominators: 3 in the East and 3 in the West, Travelling east to west and, vice versa is currently tied into the alternating east-west awarding of Conventions.

Keith and I have become friends over the past two years. I have come to respect his fanzine, *Torus*, and he epitomizes what I believe fen want in a CUFF or TAFF or DUFF candidate. Both of us wanted to go; neither of us could afford to without CUFF I trust he will get another chance in the future. It seems likely, given his popularity.

(Paul Valcour, in *Con News*, July/August, 1990)

*MLR* 14 carried news of new motions introduced at the Convention 9 business meeting, such as that in the 1991 site selection be open to bids across Canada. It was eventually announced Convention 10 would be ConVersion VII in Calgary (July 1990).

## Convention 10/Con-Version 7

The Casper awards presented July 22, 1990 at Convention 10/ Con-Version 7 (Calgary) were:

Best Long-Form Work in English: *West of January*, by Dave Duncan (Del Rey)

Meilleure livre en français: *L'Oiseau de feu (Tome 1)*, par Jacques Brossard (Léméac)

Best Short Form Work in English: "Carpe Diem", by Eileen Kernaghan (*On Spec*, fall 1989)

Meilleure nouvelle en français: "Cogito", par Elisabeth Vonarburg (*Imagine ...* 46)

Best Work in English (Other): *On Spec*, Copper Pig Writer's Society (fiction magazine)

Meilleure ouvrage (autre): *Solaris*, Luc Pomerleau red.

Fan Achievement (Organizational): The Alberta Speculative Fiction Association (for ConText 89, and formation of Speculative Writers' Association of Canada)

Fan Achievement (Fanzine): *MLR*, Michael Skeet ed.

Fan Achievement (Other): Robert Runté, for promotion of Canadian SF writing

Special notice was given that an art award category would appear in 1991.

(*Neology* 71, Sept. 1990)

Communication about the CUFF nominations were slow again in spring of 1991. John Mansfield wrote:

We now understand that nominations were to be in by 4 Feb. Did anyone see any mention of it, other than in the Jan. OSFS Statement that I received after that date?? Was anyone nominated?? How?? It's a shame that we saw little mention of CUFF in the few nationally traded/ mailed zines that Canada does have.

(*Con-TRACT* 3:2, Mar-Apr. 1991)

[to be continued]

## NATIONAL LIBRARY PLANS SF EXHIBIT

In this and a previous ish, you read about some folks from the National Library of Canada planning a major exhibit on SF. A report in the 1993-8-19 issue of the *CALGARY HERALD* via Ottawa says that the Library wants to put on a blockbuster exhibit in 1995. To put this in perspective, it has only had one blockbuster in the past, a 1988 exhibition about the late pianist Glenn Gould, which toured Canada and Japan.

No details yet as to what will be exhibited, beyond a strange manuscript from 19th-century New Brunswick. It is intended to make the library more user-friendly to Joe and Jane Taxpayer by showing books, manuscripts, and other items. Part of the problem is that the Library is built in Early Fortress style, so they will be redesigning the front entrance to make it more approachable.

The Library has been conducting surveys to see what can be done to make it more interesting to Canadians, and by extension create a political constituency to help protect it against budget-cutting politicians.

Since Canadian SF is mostly literary, this provides an opportunity to elevate it in prestige without the dead weight of get-a-lifers dressed up as Klingons. As a number of anthologies have shown, there is in fact a fair bit of SF in Canlit. The proposed exhibition will make more accessible the treasures stored in the library.

It will be interesting to see if they have much in the way of fanzines. Probably not, but I'm sure a few items must have trickled in over the years. They have a complete run of *OPUNTIA*, of course, since it has an ISSN, but I doubt many other zines deposit copies.