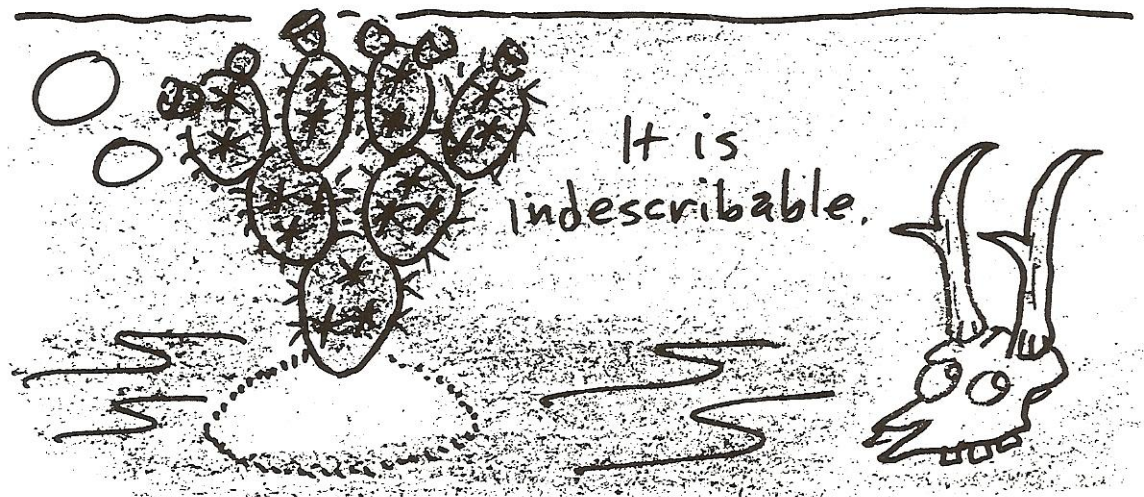


OPUNTIA

52.1A

I can't tell you the feeling I had at having
been first described 250 years ago.



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OPUNTIA is published by Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2E7. It is available for \$3 cash for a one-time sample copy, trade for your zine, or letter of comment. Americans: please don't send cheques for small amounts to Canada as the bank fee to cash them is usually more than the amount. US\$ banknotes are acceptable in Canada at par value; what we gain on the exchange rate we lose on the higher postage rate to USA. Do not send mint USA stamps as they are not valid for postage outside USA and I don't collect them.

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

I HEARD FROM: Davida Gypsy Breier, Henry Welch, Sue Jones, Ruggero Maggi, R'ykandar Korra'ti, Lois Klassen, Scott Crow, Joel Cohen, John Hertz, Phlox Icona, Ken Miller, Karen Johnson, Heather Johnson, George Parsons, Timo Palonen, Andrew Murdoch, D. Young, Garth Spencer, Henri Lucas, Roman Castenholz, Babynous Cult, Gianni Simone, Harry Warner Jr (deceased 2003 February at age 80), Sheryl Birkhead, Murray Moore, Ficus Strangulensis, Rodney Leighton, John Held Jr, Ned Brooks, Jim Caughran, La Mas Bella, Chester Cuthbert, Lloyd Penney

It was 250 years ago that the first *Opuntia* was described by a botanist and the name formally established in the scientific literature. Our man in the desert, Teddy Harvia (12341 Band Box Place, Dallas, Texas 75244), did an interview with the still young-at-heart plant, and reports it herewith on the cover.

ZINE LISTINGS

by Dale Speirs

[The Usual means \$3 cash (\$5 overseas), trade for your zine, or letter of comment on a previous issue. Americans: please don't send cheques for small amounts to Canada or overseas (the bank fee to cash them is usually more than the amount) or mint USA stamps (which are not valid for postage outside USA). US\$ banknotes are acceptable around the world.]

[If you don't see your zine listed here, don't panic; I'm working off a backlog of zine listings. The next issue, expected about June, will have the rest of my zine listings.]

Floss #2 and #3 (The Usual from Lilian Edwards, 39 Viewforth, Edinburgh EH10 4JE, Scotland) #2 starts off with British convention reports, whither zines? and is Live Journal the future?, Barbie dolls and feminism, and the obligatory IKEA article that every British zine must run at least once. More convention reports in #3, as well as fan fund foolery and trip reports.

Alexiad V1#3 to V2#1 (The Usual from Lisa and Joseph Major, 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040) A number of extended book reviews in the Joseph Major style made famous by FOSFAX, convention and trip reports, and letters of comment.

Anna Banana's Bulletin #9 (Mail art Usual from Anna Banana, RR2, 3747 Sunshine Coast Highway, Roberts Creek, British Columbia V0N 2W2) Single-sheet perzine of life in the mail art world as well as news and notes about bananas.

Cherry Monocle #8 (The Usual from Phlox Icona, 1174 Briarcliff, Suite 2, Atlanta, Georgia 30306) Collage zine, in 4.24 x 11 format.

Torcon Progress Report #4 (Torcon 3, Box 3, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1A2) Toronto will be hosting the 61st World Science Fiction Convention on the Labour Day weekend of 2003. Their latest progress report updates hotel information, as well as providing various committee reports, Hugo nomination forms, and various other items of business.

Musea #111 to #113, #117 and #118 (The Usual from Tom Hendricks, 4000 Hawthorne #5, Dallas, Texas 75219) Issue #111 is taken up entirely by a short story "Cendrillon", which is a sequel to the Cinderella story. It covers the parts that fairy tales

omit, such as how unpopular that handsome prince may be with the peasants. #112 is a set of arts-related Top Ten lists to celebrate the tenth anniversary of this zine. #113 is the rules and board layout for a game called Players, which requires the players to go through a life span and mature as much as possible in twelve categories.

Challenger #16 (The Usual from Guy Lillian, Box 53092, New Orleans, Louisiana 70153-3092) 104-page doorstep zine, starting off with tributes to the late author R.A. Lafferty, an interview with Stephen Hawking, a look at 18th-Century flying saucers, some legal case reports (Lillian is a barrister), and Mike Resnick's favourite museums (one of which is the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller, Alberta, the world's largest palaeontological museum). Also lots of zine listings, letters of comment, and convention reports.

A Trip Report Found In A Plain Manila Envelope (\$5 from Murray Moore, 1065 Henley Road, Mississauga, Ontario L4Y 1C8) One-shot, a humorous and extended trip report of an Ontario man who intrepidly makes his way west to the wilds of Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle, Washington, and home again in one piece. Not too many alarums and excursions, just a look at the natives, ranging from a chap who makes liquid nitrogen ice cream to weather wimps.

An enjoyable read.

Twink #26 to #28 (The Usual from E.B. Frohvet, 4716 Dorsey Hall Drive #506, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042) Issue #26 leads off with an article on the use of caves in SF, then remarks on escapism, writing a book set in one's hometown (guaranteed sales from the locals), zine reviews, and letters of comment. Issue #27 has book reviews, an Australian convention report, zine listings, and letters. #28 has a lesson on how to draw, religion in SF, reviews, and letters.

Vanamonde #458 to #497 (The Usual from John Hertz, 236 South Coronado Street, #409, Los Angeles, California 90057) Single-sheet zine published weekly with commentary on a wide variety of subjects.

Sugar Needle #21 and #22 (The Usual from Phlox Icona, 1174 Briarcliff, Suite 2, Atlanta, Georgia 30306) A zine specializing in candy, particularly weird brands from home and abroad. Topics include weird foreign candy such as Bleeding Bones, and how to play with your candy, such as making gum wrapper chains, knitting with licorice whips, and edible origami.

Wassamatta U. (The Usual from Randy Byers, 1013 North 36th, Seattle, Washington 98103) One-shot zine anthology of articles by Randy Byers in support of his candidacy for the 2003 TAFF. TAFF is the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, which alternates sending a European SF fan to the Americas and vice versa.

Murderous Signs #5 and #6

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(The Usual from Grant Wilkins, Box 53106, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1C5) Literary zine. #5 starts off with a rant against the Chapters/Indigo superstore chain for not stocking the ancient Greek author Hesiod on their shelves, although his books are available through Chapters Online. (For the benefit of my non-Canadian readers, there is only one bookstore chain in Canada, operating under the names of Indigo, Chapters, Coles, and W.H. Smith to give the illusion of competition. They are all owned by Heather Reisman.) Sorry, but I'll have to agree with Chapters on this one. I've ordered esoteric books online from Indigo and to wait a week for a book to arrive in the mail is no harsh thing, especially for an author who's been in print for a couple of millennia.

I think this illustrates a divide between the generations before and after the World Wide Web. I don't know how old Wilkins is but I'm guessing that even if a young man he was an adult before the arrival of the Web in 1995. Those of us of the generations prior to the Web are used to the idea that if you don't know what you are looking for in the way of a good book to read, then you indulge in serendipity by browsing bookstore shelves to find books you never would have thought to look for by purpose. This is not the way of the coming generation. I watch the kids who reached their teens after the Web arrived, and their way of serendipity is to punch words at random into Google.

Nor do I buy the argument that superstores such as Chapters/Indigo are killing off small bookstores. As someone who has been making the rounds of Calgary bookstores for 25 years and Edmonton for 4 years before that, I can say that small stores had a short lifespan well before Chapters came into town.

The main problems with independent bookstores are poor inventory control and low turnover. If you run a walk-in bookstore, you must pay the rent and provide a salary. A bookstore is a business, not a holy mission. That means you need cash flow from quick turnover. I've seen many small independent bookstores go bankrupt because they had too much esoteric 'dead' stock like Hesiod tying up their capital funds and not enough of what walk-in customers would actually buy.

Some small bookstores I only visit once every six months because their shelves are unchanged. Others I visit once a week because there is always new stock arriving. The former never last more than about two or three years. Once their owner's capital runs out, the store folds. The latter stores are highly successful; in fact one of the Calgary used-book stores (Fair's Fair) occupies a warehouse the same size as a Chapters or Indigo.

Those who yearn for the good old days of small bookstores forget that those small bookstores couldn't provide the same quality of service that the big stores do. Many are dewy-eyed over the

proprietor who special ordered books or carried esoteric stock. They don't understand that success in any business depends on doing more than your competitors. Any bookstore can special order, and carrying dead stock on the chance that one customer in five years might want it is the standard procedure in every business for going bankrupt.

The Internet is a big leveler since there is no dead stock if you are selling worldwide. A small store can still be a success if the owner relies on online sales. One of my college classmates operates a coin shop in Calgary. He told me that even in a boomtown like Calgary he wouldn't be able to keep the doors open because he handles mainly esoteric material like ancient Greek or Roman coins. The storefront is subsidized by mail order and Internet sales.

One must make a distinction between authorship, publishing, and bookselling. Authorship is where the arguments about creativity and legacies to posterity come in. Publishing is just marketing. Small-press publishers often walk about with the sanctimonious attitude that they are producing great works for posterity and their books should therefore sell automatically to anyone who even glances at the title in a catalogue. This is not so; they are selling paper that somebody smeared ink on. It isn't the reader's fault for not buying poetry, just as it isn't the poet's fault for not buying

Broncomatic food slicer. In both cases the producers have to convince the customer their products are worthwhile. Bookselling is a business. No excuses about doing something you love or living among the cultural elite. Sales must exceed expenses from get-go, otherwise the store will eat into the invested capital. When the capital vanishes, so does the store.

Elsewhere in this issue is another rant, this time by a poet upset that a university library won't stock his preference in poetry. It was difficult to read the article, as the author lowercases his personal pronouns, uses ampersands instead of 'and', and does all the typographical things that were revolutionary when e.e. cummings did it but nowadays merely interfere with the reader. His main target is McMaster University, which has decided to collect Canadian poetry only before 2000, and sent in an order to the author that ended at the letter P in the sales catalogue. You can tell exactly what happened here; the buyer had X amount of dollars in the budget and simply went down the list until the money was used up. Not exactly a planned acquisition policy.

Knowing how some libraries manage their collections, I'm not surprised at how McMaster operates. My favourite story about library bookbuying was told to me by a friend who works in a large public library which shall be nameless, so I'll call it the Cowtown Public Library. She happened to be talking to the book buyer who mentioned a title he was ordering for \$25. She walked

him over to the library book bin where they sell discards and pointed out three perfectly-usable copies of that title, 25 cents each in cost. She suggested that he buy the three copies and then take her out to dinner on the remaining \$24.25. "Did he do it?", I asked. "Yes, but we only went across the street to the City Hall cafeteria.", she replied.

Zeen Beat #3 (US\$3 from King Wenclas, Box 42077, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101) The theme of this issue is the Underground Literary Alliance, a tiny group ranting against the smug complacency of mainstream literature. A substantial portion of this issue is taken up with a history of it and its activities. I think they'll have about as much luck as SF fans have had in stemming the flood of bland Arthurian fantasies that drown out quality SF on the store shelves.

I have mixed emotions about zine organizations such as the ULA. On the one hand, their shouting and ranting might be noticed by a few new converts, but more likely they will degenerate into infighting. Reading through the account of the ULA reminded me of Stewart Home's description of three guys meeting in a basement and then publishing a 50-page manifesto under the guise of the International People's Democratic Solidarity Front, to make it sound like a vast conclave that altered the course of human history.

Everybody has only so much energy to devote to causes. When you're young you can take on the whole world, but as you get older you learn to pick your battles and concentrate on what's important to you. The energy put into organizational activities diverts energy away from publishing zines. Club activities are ephemeral, but the written word remains. I put my energy into zines because there is a better chance that my words will be preserved for posterity. Zines are international by type of interest, whereas clubs tend to be local by geography. With involvement in a club, one seldom moves far from a given geographic area. With zines, one can inexpensively make an impact on the far side of the globe.

The Zine Dump #2 (The Usual from Guy Lillian, Box 53092, New Orleans, Louisiana 70153) Reviewzine, with emphasis on SF fanzines.

WHAT IS AN APA?

An apa (amateur press association) is a method of zine distro, whereby members send in x number copies of their zine to the Official Editor, who collates them into bundles and returns one bundle to each member. Passive subscribers are not permitted in apas; you must publish a certain number of pages per year, known as minac (minimum activity). Annual dues are usually assessed

to cover the cost of postage. Most apas limit membership. Most are under 100 members, since smaller apas are cheaper to run and the smaller size allows members to get to know each other.

Point Of Divergence #34 (Point of Divergence A.P.A., c/o Jim Rittenhouse, Box 562, Lisle, Illinois 60532) This is an apa devoted to alternative history, both fiction and speculative fact. Membership is limited to 30, but there are vacancies at the moment. For POD, thirty copies of your zine are required, which must be 8.5 x 11 (to allow binding the bundles) and of course deal with alternative history. Annual dues are US\$10 to defray postage. Besides the usual mainstays of what-if World War Two and the American War Between the States, the topics of this apa range all over history, modern and ancient. This bundle includes speculation on a Celtic Empire, a Neanderthal society in today's world, marsupials as the dominant mammals instead of placentals, and a wrong turn in the colonization of New France/Ohio/Louisiana.

FAPA #262 (Details from Robert Lichtman, Box 30, Glen Ellen, California 95442) Now in its 66th year, the latest bundle has 28 zines totaling 246 pages. Annual dues to cover postage are US\$12 per year and you must produce at least 8 pages annually (8.5 x 11 format). Zines vary widely in content but the overall emphasis is on SF and fantasy.

FHAPA #4 (Details from Fan History A.P.A., c/o Nigel Rowe, 431 South Dearborn #402, Chicago, Illinois 60605) This apa covers the history of science fiction fandom. Contributions include extracts from histories in progress, reprints of old fanzines, and discussions on indexing and bibliography.

The Aftermath #2 (The Usual from Ken Faig Jr, 2311 Swainwood Drive, Glenview, Illinois 60025-2741) A convention report for the 127th annual gathering of the National Amateur Press Association, without a doubt the oldest continuously existing group of zine publishers. Zinesters who think the underground press began in the 1960s and 1970s take note.

Amapra #16 to #18 and Lamplighter #12 (The Usual from Guy Miller, 2951 Archer Lane, Springfield, Ohio 45503-1209) Brief apazines with reports on the 2002 American A.P.A., feuds with wild turkeys, and other apa doings.

The Fossil #312 (US\$10 per year from The Fossils Inc., c/o Gary Bossler, 145 Genoa Avenue SW, Massillon, Ohio 44646) An alumnus association for apa zinesters, with reports on the 99th annual Fossil luncheon (the organization is 100 years old in 2003), discussion about the Library of Amateur Journalism, which wants to preserve zines, and some history and biography. Good reading to pass on to modern zinesters who think zines were invented in the 1970s.

Ethel The Aardvark #103 to #105

(The Usual from Melbourne Science Fiction Club, Box 212, World Trade Centre, Victoria 3005, Melbourne, Australia) Clubzine with news and notes, movie and book reviews, convention reports, and letters of comment.

Fantasy Commentator #53/54 (US\$10 from A. Langley Searles, 48 Highland Circle, Bronxville, New York 10708-5909) 134 pages, square-bound, a definitive literary reference on the history of SF and fantasy. What sets it apart from other fanhistory zines is its reliance on the actual facts, not just authors writing "I seem to remember reading somewhere ...".

Nowhere is this better illustrated than the essay by Eric Davin and Norman Metcalf on female SF writers of the 1930s and 1940s. It has long been an article of faith among feminists and male SF historians alike that female SF authors were scarce to the point of almost non-existence during that period, that male SF editors were prejudiced against feminine by-lines for stories, and that the almost entirely male readership was equally dismissive.

Davin and Metcalf did what the academics and feminists had never done; they inspected all the major SF magazines of that era and counted female by-lines. They compared actual dates and editors to what modern critics were saying and found huge discrepancies. Although women were in the minority as SF

writers then as they still are today, they were not invisible to that generation of readers, notwithstanding how overlooked they may have been by the feminists of the 1980s and 1990s. The male editors accused of being sexist pigs did in fact publish many stories by authors they knew to be women.

This essay explodes some major myths. Catherine L. Moore published as C.L. Moore, and it has long been accepted that she did so to disguise her identity as a woman. Marion Zimmer Bradley is quoted as saying that Moore told her the use of initials was to protect her job at a bank during the Great Depression. Had she been known by her supervisors to write that trash, she would have lost her job. Today few if any employers would dare do such a thing, but only a dwindling number of SF writers who were young back then are left to testify as to the truth of such threats. Gender didn't enter into it; even in the 1950s, Isaac Asimov (then a professor of biochemistry) was nervous about the reaction of his university to him publishing SF.

Davin and Metcalf present their data in an appendix, with names, dates, titles, and magazine issues. This will be a primary source for the litcrit crowd. Academics who pontificate on SF seldom or never have the original source magazines at hand in their university library. They rely for their textual interpretations on modern book editions that may or may not bear any resemblance to what happened 60 years ago. The whole thing reminds me of

Samuel Johnson's opening paragraph in his 1775 pamphlet TAXATION NO TYRANNY: "*In all the parts of human knowledge, whether terminating in science merely speculative, or operating upon life private or civil, are admitted some fundamental principles, or common axioms, which being generally received are little doubted, and being little doubted have been rarely proved.*"

The other major piece in this issue is a continuing series by the late Sam Moskowitz on his dealings with Hugo Gernsback, the founder of modern SF. Moskowitz writes with a practical tone and discusses such things as why all start-up commercial newstand magazines usually last at least three issues before they go bankrupt (because that's how long it takes before the sales figures are in from the first issue). He was there, publishing magazines for Gernsback, worrying about getting copy, and the practicalities of distributing to newstands. There might be a few graduate students left who write of high-minded literary influences when reviewing books and stories, but as Moskowitz demonstrates, the reality was that stories are cut to size and altered to fit the whim of the editor signing the cheque.

The rest of this issue is taken up by a miscellany of minor articles, book reviews, and forgettable poetry. Well recommended for the serious reader of SF, and for graduate students in literature (SF or not) as a shock course in the realities of publishing.

As The Crow Flies #5 (The Usual from Frank Denton, 14654 - 8 Avenue SW, Seattle, Washington 98166) Thoughts on thinning out book collections, and a number of personal diary items.

Banana Wings #17 and #18 (The Usual from Claire Brialey, 26 Northampton Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7HA, England) Lots of British convention reports. In #17 is a history of the SF magazine UNKNOWN, and reviews of recent Big Dumb War Movies (like the reviewer, I found it implausible that the hero of PEARL HARBOUR could fly against Germans in Britain, arrive at Pearl Harbour just in time for that disturbance, and finally take part in the Dolittle raid against Japan. I'm surprised he didn't drop the bomb on Hiroshima and then show up at the unconditional surrender as one of the signatories). #18 is mostly a "Whither fanzine fandom?" issue.

Bibliozone #69 (Mail art Usual from John Held Jr, Box 410837, San Francisco, California 94141) Single-sheet reviewzine discussing recent books on mail art and related fields. This issue looks at two books, one about a forgotten era of Russian avant-garde, and the other on the activities of Angela and Peter Netmail.

Bildstörung #6 and #7 and Handschrift #2 (Mail art Usual from Roman Castenholz, Triftstrasse 47, 53919 Weilerswist, Deutschland) In German, mail art documentation and commentary.

Mouse Age: (Christa Behmenburg, Max Planck Str. 64, D 85375 Neufahrn, Deutschland) When Douglas C. Engelbert from the Stanford Research Institute in California developed in 1968 a wooden box named "X-Y position indicator for a display system" nobody was interested in this useless toy. Two young Swiss engineers, Daniel Borel and Pierluigi Zappacosta, found Logitech in 1981. They took up Engelbert's idea and transformed his clumsy box into a handy little animal, tapered to a point with a fat back part and a long tail. The computer mouse was born. Later on Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, and finally Bill Gates, helped the plastic rodent to spread all over the world. Today no business, no communications, no information can do without it. It has changed the world for better or worse. But how tragic; with development it is going to lose its tail. Within the next decade it will probably have died out.

What do you think about the computer mouse? How has it influenced you and our world? Save it for the future by your art work! For a documentation and exhibition of cartoons, caricatures, photographs, paintings, and collages of the computer mouse, I need contributions from artists all over the world. The exhibition will take place in Berlin in 2005. Deadline is April 2004. All techniques. Size: postcard. No return, no jury, doc to all.

The Penguin: (Jeroen ter Welle, Boeninlaan 393, 1102 TL Amsterdam, Netherlands) Theme on the penguin, size A6 (14.8 x 10.5 cm). Send 16 originals or copies, documentation to every 15 contributors. No deadline.

Archetypes And Altars: (Ginger Mason, Box 39168, Vancouver, British Columbia V6R 1G0) From the book SACRED CONTRACTS by Caroline Myss: *"Platonic forms are not conceptual abstractions that the human mind creates by generalizing from a class of particulars. rather they possess a quality of being, a degree of reality that is superior to that of the concrete world. Platonic archetypes form the world and stand beyond it. They manifest themselves within time and yet are timeless. They constitute the veiled essence of things."* And Kay Turner in BEAUTIFUL NECESSITY reveals how the altar is a home for sacred images. We gather together statues, flowers, pictures, photographs, amulets, stones, shells, talismans; symbolic of our most intimate beliefs and fears, memories and dreams. We carry on, or re-make ancient spiritual traditions. Tell me about or show me your archetypes and altars. I'm looking for the art and meaning of our joys and sorrows, themes that figure largely or recur in our lives. Open-ended, ongoing documentation.

Comforters: (Lois Klassen, Box 74540, Vancouver, British Columbia V6K 4P4) Send me quilt squares (6" x 6") to be used on the top of comforters that I am making for displaced people

(refugees). The comforters, also known as blankets or quilts, will be distributed by the Mennonite Central Committee, the Red Cross, and the Red Crescent societies. The squares can incorporate artwork but they must be washable and durable; poly-cotton is the best material. Send as many as you want because each comforter needs 130! I will return photos and periodical documentation about the project.

The Tree Of Poetry: (dott.ssa Tiziana Baracchi, Via Cavallotti, 83-B, 30171 Venezia-Mestre, Italy) The Tree of Poetry is a very uncommon species of plant; it is an American maple which is in Venezia-Mestre in 83/B Cavallotti Street, Itinerari '80 Centre. Giancarlo Da Lio dedicated this tree to poetry in a lot of artistic performances. Below its fronds, sheets with verses, in plastic envelopes to preserve from rain, hang down. The poets read their lines in the shade of the tree. Painters and sculptors put their works on walls and grass. Itinerari '80 is an artistic movement; from different trends many excellent artists gather strength around Giancarlo Da Lio. Moreover, as well as they work, they must manage their work making use of everything and everywhere. Well, it is necessary to show works not only in the official galleries, but above all in the alternative art spaces: where people go and come, on the road, in the shops, in the gardens too; so the Tree of Poetry was born and is growing. Do you want to send your mail art or mail poesy?

Think Here: (Jose Roberto Sechi, Av. M29, N° 2183, Jd. Sao Joao, Rio Claro SP - 13505 - 410, Brazil) Mail art magazine. Drawing, design, painting, engraving, gluing, rubber stamp, writing, poetry, visual poetry, photograph, etc.. In black and white, please, maximum 13 cm x 8 cm (horizontal format). Theme free, no return, no jury, no deadline, documentation to every 18 participants.

Photo Exchange: (Scott Garinger, Box 321, El Segundo, California 90245-0321) Will trade photographs, any subject.

Collage d'aujourd'hui: (Dianne Bertrand, Art terre, 9109 Deschambault, Saint Leonard, Quebec, H1R 2C6) Mail art collage.

Brain Cell Fractal: (Ryosuke Cohen, 3-76-I-A-613, Yagumokitacho, Moriguchi-City, Osaka 570, Japan) Send 150 stickers or some other type of small mail art image. These are collated into a collage on an 11" x 17" poster, and a copy sent back to each contributor, along with a list of names and addresses of those participating.

Postcard Mail Art Project: (dott.ssa Tiziana Baracchi, Via Cavallotti, 83-B, 30171 Venezia-Mestre, Italy) Technique: free. Size: 15 cm x 10 cm. No deadline.

Artist Trading Cards:

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(Chuck Stake, 736 - 5 Street NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 1P9, Canada) ATCs are works of art created on 64 mm x 89 mm card stock. They are the same size as hockey trading cards, but the similarity stops here. Cards may depict anything, be 2-D or 3-D, they may be original, a series, an edition, or a multiple. Cards are signed on the back by the artist and, if necessary, an edition number is included. ATCs are paintings, drawings, collages, photographs, rubberstamp works, mixed-media, etchings, found images, recycled works of art, assemblages, etcetera. The only stipulation is that the card fits in the standard plastic sheets that hockey cards are normally stored within.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Dale Speirs

Drake's Fortune by Richard Rayner (Doubleday, 2002) is the biography of Oscar Hartzell, who was one of the biggest confidence men in the advance fee fraud, whereby money is solicited in advance for services never performed or goods never delivered. Hartzell's forte was the Drake estate fraud, which enlisted thousands of victims who thought they would be in line for a piece of Sir Francis Drake's estate. There never was any

such estate, nor any legal basis to claim the money centuries after his death, but Hartzell and other practitioners of the fraud didn't let details like that stop them. The original version of this fraud was the Spanish prisoner who knew where treasure was buried and would let the victim have a share in exchange for getting him out, and the modern version is the corrupt Nigerian civil servant who wants the victim to launder his money for him in exchange for a share.

Oscar Hartzell was an Illinois farmboy who later made and lost a fortune ranching in Texas. He met up with a woman named Sudie Whittaker, who had been working the Drake estate scam, and her partner Milo Lewis. Hartzell's initial contact was via some of his relatives who had been victimized. He investigated, and liked the idea of the scam so much he eventually took it over. He attacked and ran out anyone else trying to work their way into control of the Drake estate fraud.

Hartzell spent eleven years in England, working his scam from a safe distance, where his victims couldn't see his lavish lifestyle. They couldn't harass him with legal action at such a distance, and he was careful not to hit on British nationals so Scotland Yard couldn't get him.

Feeble attempts to prosecute Hartzell in the USA began in 1928 but failed. He then used this as proof to his gullible marks that the

scheme was legit. The Great Depression further encouraged his victims, desperate to escape the hard times. Drake's estate supposedly included valuable lands in the heart of London, not to mention all the lost income and interest owing thereon over the last few centuries. The amount, if true, would have been in the hundreds of millions of dollars in uninflated currency. His secretary's record showed that between June 1931 and December 1932, Hartzell took in \$250,000 or about \$2.5 million in today's currency. He lived like an earl in London.

Hartzell constantly promised results to the victims, and relied on the day's news events to provide excuses for unexpected delays. The final distribution was delayed because the King was ill and he had to sign off on the distribution. The Great Depression occurred because the British government was quietly selling the nation's birthright to meet the due bill to Drake's heirs. And so forth.

In 1930, U.S. Postal Inspector John Sparks began an investigation and finally got enough American and British officials pulling the same way. Hartzell was extradited from Britain in 1932. He arrived home to a hero's welcome from a mob of gullibles who refused to believe he was a sinner. The trial jury thought otherwise, and he was sentenced to ten years in Leavenworth. He was out temporarily on bail, and renewed the Drake scam with vigour, claiming a conspiracy by the government.

Finally he lost the last of his appeals, went into

prison, and eventually drifted into insanity. Even with him in jail, his lieutenants continued to operate the scam. Now they had a martyr. Time was unkind to Hartzell, and he died in a prison hospital.

The Drake scam outlived Hartzell by several years before it finally dissipated. Today it is survived by the flourishing Nigerian scam. It is astonishing how the will to believe in a fraud is so great. I dare say it is greater than most people hold their religious or political beliefs. The UFO-nauts, creationists, and conspiracy theorists cling to their shabby worlds with an intensity that defies the facts presented to them.

Indexers And Indexes In Fact And Fiction by Hazel Holt (University of Toronto Press, 2001) starts off with a history of indexes and then devotes most of the book to samples of indexes produced over the past five centuries.

Ancient manuscripts did not have indexes because each was unique and most were unpaginated. A few were produced with concordances or alphabetical word lists, but indexes as we know them today did not come into existence until printing of books with page numbers made it useful to do the work. The modern index dates from the 1460s. Most professional indexers today are women, and most amateur indexers are wives of the authors. Hazel Holt gives examples of indexes, the inadvertent humour in

some of them, and demonstrates good and bad indexing techniques.

Early indexing was hazardous. The first man to publish a concordance of the Roman Catholic Bible was burned at the stake for it in 1544, because the index reduced the Bible to human proportions. Strangely enough, the oldest index in continuous print is the 1737 Bible concordance by Alexander Cruden.

William Pryne, a Puritan, published his book HISTRIO-MATRIX in 1633; it was a condemnation of the theatrical arts. He indexed actresses as "Women-actors notorious whores". Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, liked to act in pastoral plays, and took great offense at Pryne. She had him prosecuted, and the index was introduced as evidence. Pryne was sentenced to a £5,000 fine, expelled from Oxford and his legal practice, had his book burned by the hangman, lost both ears in the pillory, and imprisoned.

Political disputes were used by indexers of yore to get even with the author or the subject matter, as when a Tory indexed a book written by a Whig or vice versa. As an example, a 1724 index included the following citations:

Election	see Bribery
Coin	see Treason
London	see Outlawry

Bad indexing abounds, usually identified by arbitrary headings. One of the most famous bad indexes is also one that is still widely used today, Palmer's index to THE TIMES of London. Like the Cobol programmers who caused the Y2K problem by crimping on space, Palmer gave each item a single entry, and seldom cross referenced. His headings were often as well hidden as a Microsoft Help topic, such as putting a drought under "Present dry season". I have personal experience in using Palmer, since I do a lot of historical research and often search THE TIMES for entries. (It and the NEW YORK TIMES are the only two major newspapers for which print indexes are readily available for the complete run; on-line keyword searches are incomplete, miss synonyms, and usually outright pathetic.) Most of my work is postal history; I soon learned not only to check obvious headings such as 'Post office' or 'Mail', but any variation however obscure of the topic I was researching. When, for example, I was writing my history of the advance fee mail fraud (the Drake estate, the Spanish prisoner, etcetera) I also had to check under 'Swindle', 'Fraud', 'Crime', 'Police', 'Court', and 'Spanish prisoner'. If a court case proceeded over several days, each day was often reported under a different heading.

Most of Hazel Bell's book is extracts from indexes of the centuries past. It makes the book the kind you can read a few pages of in quick moments. I pick out some random selections as follow:

Ablative, shameless indifference to the, of businessman
Aldermen not necessarily gluttons
Birds, for the
Falling into water, how to act
Heaven, system of book-keeping in
King, see Treason
Majorities, blockhead
Pigs (grunting of), Strauss
Plague of insects, Rachmaninoff
Plain English, queer delusion of British Man that he talks
Rex, persistent litigation of
Washing, cautiously recommended

American Indian Victories by Dale R. Cozort (2003, trade paperback, 208 pages) is a speculative fact book on the aboriginal tribes of North and Central America. Cozort examines a variety of alternative history scenarios that could have changed the history of this continent.

Counterfactuals involving the early settlement of the Americas where the aboriginals were victorious or at least held their own against Europeans have never been that common. Cozort points

out the two major reasons why: disease, and lack of technology. The Europeans were several millennia ahead of the American tribes in technology. Most of the natives were still in the Stone Age, many had not reached the agricultural stage, and only a few were advanced metal workers.

It is difficult to come up with alternative histories where such primitive peoples could win over the Europeans, and almost impossible when combined with the constant plagues of diseases introduced into the Americas by the Europeans. Some AH authors wave a wand and have the tribes quickly become resistant, but as Cozort notes, if the Europeans had only limited resistance to smallpox and other diseases after centuries of exposure, how could it be plausible that the natives suddenly gain resistance soon enough to make a difference? Diseases were cyclic, flaring up when population density increased, and dying down as the survivors scattered. The worst effect of plagues was that they wiped out the experienced tribal leaders and the skilled tradesmen, forcing the tribe to simplify its culture and lose much knowledge.

Another important aspect to observe is that the natives were not rigidly fixed in ethnic groups or geographical area. Tribes formed and dissolved regularly, lost or gained land, and altered their way of life under stress. The Choctaw, for example, did not exist until just before the Europeans arrived. Individuals changed tribes for advantage, exactly as people today emigrate to another country.

Too many authors write blithely about tribes such as the Iroquois as if they were fixed nations, rather than loose mixtures of clans.

Cozort considers a wide variety of counterfactuals, organized by theme. Such themes include a native disease such as one Cozort calls lockjoint that would affect Europe the same way smallpox affected the Americas. What if the aboriginals had managed to develop better technology, or had time to borrow from the Europeans before being extirpated? What if certain wars had gone the other way, as they nearly did in our timeline? What if the early Europeans had colonized in different locations? Such things could have happened in our timeline.

The results would be an unrecognizable continent. Cozort takes these divergences as far along as he can before the alternative world becomes a wild card far removed from our history. It would be nice if AH fiction writers would write from logical outlines such as Cozort uses. It would make more plausible AH stories with little extra work on the author's part. What comes through in Cozort's book is that no single factor can be considered in isolation when writing AH. It is no different in our society today; no politician is a single-issue campaigner, and no legislature deals only in one isolated topic. Everything is related to everything else, and a slight change in one thing sends ripples through many seemingly unrelated topics. That is the fun of AH.