



"The Great Fannish North" Original art for "New Canadian Fandom, Eh?!", 1982

- THE GREAT WHITE ZINE -

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If you're Canadian and haven't guessed instantly where the title is from, then shame on you! It probably means that you are under 35 and don't remember seeing the great Canadian comedy show, SCTV. Of the many memorable characters created for SCTV, few can have had the influence on popular culture of Bob and Doug McKenzie' short, aimless sketches. Originally added simply to create bogus "Canadian Content," the unscripted spots quickly gained a following. The Brothers – who were in reality Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas – in fact survived the show that spawned them, to star in their own movie (Strange Brew) and released their own album of comedy skits. The show within a show was called "The Great White North," and was filmed in the cheapest imaginable set, a coffee table, a gas grill (for back bacon), two stolen office chairs and a large number of empty beer cartons. The McKenzie Brothers wore costumes immediately identifiable as "Canajun" – winter jackets, plaid shirts and toques. Of course, no Canadian has dressed this way since the last beaver was shot in downtown Toronto. (1976, I think.) No Canadian has spoken the way Bob & Doug spoke either. (Not unless you hang around freight docks a lot, eh?) The spoofing of dated Canadiana was in fact more sophisticated than it seemed. Bob & Doug were not so much making fun of Canadians as they were making fun of how Americans *thought* of Canadians. But if you're not Canadian, you missed all that, eh?

So what has any of this to do with this collection of articles on Canadian fan history? Well, quite a long time ago I teamed up with Edmonton fan Mike Hall to spoof what was then the flagship fanzine from the Canadian west – *New Canadian Fandom*. *New Canadian Fandom, Eh?* was pretty funny, if I must say so myself. I must... hardly anyone would remember it, now. There was only one cover possible, way back in 1982, and that was to represent Canadian fans as the familiar and lovable hosers of the Second City Television Network. Since many of the articles in this collection were originally published in NCF, it seemed the appropriate thing to resurrect the Bob & Doug cover for this edition. Also, it would save me an awful lot of time if I didn't have to draw anything new.

The articles in this collection were all written a very long time ago. So long, that I was constantly surprised while revising them in digital format. I had forgotten more than I imagined possible. Equally astonishing is how things have changed so very much in the interim. It was impossible to leave certain statements as they were. If I said, "he never ate another lemon after that" and then 23 years later he indeed **did** eat another lemon, could I just ignore it? No sir. Once I began updating the text with footnotes, it was hard to stop. There are over 60. Also added to the collection are a number of supplementary articles I think you may enjoy. Some are informative, others merely entertaining.

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1. Toronto the Not-So-Good, One Vice Leads to Another

New Canadian Fandom 2/3 Sept. 1981

Normally, a columnist begins by insulting his editor. He makes out how the editor begged and pleaded for the merest morsel of the writer's immortal words. But, in fact, it was the other way around – as it probably is in most cases. I begged Robert Runté for this column. I mean, if Robert is going to arrogate to himself the honour of reviving the original *CanFan*, he might pull it off. He might also fall flat on his face. But, if the new *CanFan* succeeds, I want to be on the bandwagon, reaping some of the egoboo Robert has sown.

But, when I sat down to write a first instalment, the unexpected happened. For a long time, I have dropped hints that I would write a history of Canadian fandom. Whenever asked when I would begin this *tour de force*, I would dote on the difficulties of such a history. There were literally yards-deep piles of fanzines that I had to read first, and many more feet of zines that I had no copies of. I wouldn't be able to begin the necessary reading until I had compiled a bibliography. And *that* project was help up until I had catalogued my collection. Once that was done, the rest would follow. How far had I cataloged the collection? To "H" – as far as Harry Warner's *Horizons*, to be precise. I see, you ask, and how long had *that* taken? About a year... In other words, I was procrastinating.

It seemed only logical, though, to begin a column about Canadian fanhistory with a sketchy overview. After an introduction, I had planned to sum up the last 40-odd years in a few pages, and then close off with a promises for future instalments. I have rarely so miscalculated in ten years of fanac!

Only half a page into the history, and I realized that I didn't know what I was talking about. I dragged out the original *CanFans* and began a jag of reading that lasted two days, then I was back at the typer. A few pages more went by without trouble, and then I noticed more gaps in my understanding. I spend a couple of evenings on the phone with John Millard and P. Howard Lyons, veterans of Canadian fandom in the 1940s.

Back at the typer, I saw that my manuscript had only reached 1957 and that it was already six pages long. At a conservative estimate, the remainder would be three times that if I kept to the same scale of detail. I fooled myself, page-by-page, into thinking I could hold myself to that length. But 7 or 8 more pages crept by, all the while checking my source material against every paragraph, until I brought the history up until only 1975. For only Toronto, at that. I broke off, and began again with Vancouver fandom from 1968. All too soon it was apparent that I knew far too little about the subject. Out came another couple of feet of fanzines I needed to read. More days went by. Finally, with 18 pages of manuscript completed and still only up to 1975, it became obvious that even a brief history of Canadian fandom was a major project, and not one suitable for an installment of a regular column. Besides which, I was already past my deadline.

The result is that if you want an sort of complete history, you will have to wait. The manuscript as it stands is half-done and I won't abandon it.¹ But, it will probably appear in a Canadian fanthology, later this year, along with illustrative reprints of art and fan writing from the original CanFan, A Bas, Honque, Energumen, Simulacrum and other native specimens of our past. The details of Canfanthology² haven't been worked out, but, as there's no egoboo in keeping secrets, you can bet you'll hear about it when they have been. In the meantime, I have a first instalment of a column to write.

Ahem.

Back in the good old days of fannish legend, when the aforesaid legends were 14 and 15 and making names for themselves in fandom by acting their ages, Canadian fan history began in Aurora Ontario, of all places. There seem to have been sporadic outburst of fan activity in Vancouver before that time, but nothing that established a continuous tradition. In Aurora, however, a small number of Toronto-fans discovered each other in the guise of students of St. Andrew's College for Boys. Fred Hurter Jr. and Joe "Beak" Taylor were the most prominent members of this nascent group, by virtue of editing two extremely primitive fanzines – *Censored* and *Eight-Ball*.

Upon graduation, Fred took *Censored* home with him to Montréal, and Beak took *Eight-Ball* to Toronto. As it happened, Beak was first to hit on the idea of renaming his zine Canadian Fandom, thus ensuring him a monument to fannish posterity. Fred, disappointed by this coup, published only one issue of his zine from Montréal, then gave up to the inevitability of history. Instead of publishing his own ish, he wrote for CanFan in future.

The establishment of *Canadian Fandom* in Toronto in 1943 was nearly the same as the beginning of Canadian fandom, as the city dominated Canadian fan history well into the 1970s. In 1943, this was an easy matter, as there hardly was any Canadian fandom found outside the boundaries of Muddy York. Among the few exceptions was Les Croutch. He lived a two hour drive north of the city, in Parry Sound, and visited Toronto as often as humanly possible. But there wasn't really a local group, as we'd think of it today. When Beak arrived, he made friends with a few other young fans, including Al Betts (an artist) and John Mason. The three of them got together whenever Croutch was in town, but it was said once in *CanFan's* pages that there had never been more than six Toronto fans assembled in one place!

¹ Oh yeah? Dare me to abandon it! You might say that I didn't – after all, I might pick it up again anytime. Then again, I have so much to do already that I refuse to even give odds that I ever will. – June 2010

² I wonder what Canfanthology I was talking about?

Nevertheless, there were many fans known to Beak that he rarely saw or never even met. Most were subscribers to *CanFan*, or wrote locs for the letter column. The names of these fans make up a list of Canadian fans you can find in *CanFan 7* – it’s all of about 25 names long. Some of them, however, appear never to have been in print *anywhere else*. They are totally obscure to me. And yet, they occasionally ring a bell in someone else’s memory, or in some other context.

Sometimes a more sinister one.

There is a substratum to fandom that is rarely noted, that is largely unknown to fans with more wholesome and outgoing dispositions. These are the collectors who scrooge away their dusty tomes and disintegrating pulp magazines in dark cells of their homes and souls. Theirs is a formless fraternity with a vague history. The chronicler can see hints of them in the early CanFans, as a prehistoric fandom that existed before fanzines and apas could publicize their hobby. Virtually nothing of their story was preserved in print until a fortunate windfall of original Derelict Bill Grant’s personal papers fell into modern hands. Most of it was immediately destroyed by the shocked possessor, a dealer in antique books. Luckily, enough remained to be passed on to me, from which I was able to piece together some of the facts.

Collectors are often not very nice people. They fight, they haggle over prices and they jealously regard every book and magazine as “theirs,” and view every sale to a competitor as a theft from their own collection. Sometimes they go to further extremes. One old coot I knew resorted to a petty strategy in pricing his books at conventions. He would offer a book he had for sale to every dealer in the room, one by one, driving the price as high as each dealer would go, then walk away... He never had any intention of selling, just seeing what the market would bear.

Another “gentleman” was reputed to give false information to researchers if he didn’t like their looks. Some collectors, who also dealt on the side, refuse to make a deal until the desperate buyer agrees to include some other expensive but unwanted item as part of the price. Knowing how much to hold out for and who can be most easily extorted is impossible without necessary privy information, of course. So, collectors of this stripe habitually spy on one another, and just as habitually let no-one know the least thing about their own collections. They sometimes *steal* from one another, too. One friend of mine whose father ran an antiquarian book store told me how it had been robbed of valuable books in the middle of the night. She told me too, of similar capers. Another book dealer I knew innocently bought stolen books, and lost a small fortune. I could also mention a well-known, unemployed magazine editor and one Worldcon chairman who have been accused of being thieves.³ The latter even tried to sue his victim for copyright infringement!

Failing all else, the meaner species of collectors will destroy each other’s collections if they can. Films once available to Toronto cons are now unavailable because of a raids on the collector that resulted in confiscation. The thanks for this go to one selfish S.O.B. who tipped off the police to increase the scarcity and value of his own film collection. So much do some fans love the dreams of their youth that no-one else may share them. In a possessive madness, many will extirpate every copy of a treasured book or magazine but the one in their own collection.

³ I can’t, actually. I’ve forgotten who they might possibly be.

Already anal-retentive about the whole thing, such excesses only encourage these typically late-middle-aged adolescents to be even more uptight and more fiercely secretive about their vices. Not only fearing their passion for collecting will be seen as a flaw in their outward respectability, they fear rather than welcome kindred souls. As for young upstarts who were soiling diapers when the earliest collectors were buying Astounding mint off the newsstands.. the oldest generation puts hatred of each other aside for a united loathing of Johnny–come-latelies vying for their books. In such poisonous atmospheres were the souls nurtured who are our first *visible* generation of fandom.

Bill Grant himself was known by the other Derelicts as a “leg man.” He savoured feminine appendages almost as much as he was excited by bridges, saving a large number of photos of both. Legs and bridges appear regularly in the hundreds of feet of film Grant shot while attending early cons in the 1950s. He saw the humour of it, and made fun of his own well-known proclivities. A pan of a bare leg, in one such film, moves upward from the ankle to the rolled-up trouser of no less than Bob Tucker. (This was about as kinky as the Old Derelicts got... and Bob Tucker too, as far as I know.) Subsequently, he was approached one fine day by a collector of unusually furtive character, and asked whether Grant had any more such films. Grant recoiled, quite properly, and the Creature of Darkness skulked back into the Shadows. (By day, he was no doubt a respected banker or educator.)

It was too late for a cover-up, though. An outsider had learned some of the details and activities of the collector community, and they had retreated underground immediately. But Grant now knew exactly which rock to look under for them. It became general knowledge in local fandom that not only were there secretive collectors, but a circle of even more clandestine collectors who branched out into whips and chains, leather fetishism, restraints, edged instruments and other unnatural appetites as a direct outgrowth of their interest in fantasy and weird fiction! The cadaver was out of the grave and couldn't be reburied.

So far, my account has been inexcusably purple, but I can't deny its terrific fun to write like this... and so far I've been largely factual. I can substantiate a good deal of this, though admittedly much is hear-say.

The focal point of the collecting underground in T.O. was a place called *Rendezvous Bookstore*, run by a man named Hansberger. Whatever was in the window, the main business of *Rendezvous* was selling pornography under the counter. This was at a time when there were severe legal penalties for selling porn, so the customers generally left the store carrying plain brown-paper bags. In the back room, though, were a few shelves of Arkham House editions of Lovecraft, Blackwood, Bierce, Smith and other macabre writers. Customers of *Rendezvous* came equally for either commodity, or both, and were remembered as a pretty odd bunch by one old Toronto fan. Correspondence, unfortunately now destroyed, touched on an S&M apa called *The Thing*. At least one mailing was said to have been cut out in the shape of a penis. I have seen what I take to be a veiled reference to *The Thing* in print myself, in a contemporary Toronto fanzine.

Bill Grant passed on little enough information about the seamier side of the old *Toronto Derelicts*. Even without him, an inclination to a certain mild perversity was obvious. Boyd Raeburn, Ron Kidder and Gerald Steward were a later generation of fans than Grant or Beak Taylor, and a little wilder. After a minor ideological rift of the sort common among groups of fans, they styled

themselves as the *Derelect Insurgents*. They were the leather jacket and duck's ass haircut boys, enthusiasts of racy black music whose very name was slang for sex, smokers of funny cigarettes they got from jazz musicians they hung around, and *unthinkable for the time* one was gay.⁴ The funny business topped with sports cars and saxophones, however. But the official Insurgent Black Leather Jacket struck a note not normally found on a blues scale.

Tame as they were, the *Derelect Insurgents* were only an interlude. The real Bad Boys emerged again nearly 20 years after Torcon 1 and Beak Taylor had hung up his beanie.

George Henderson is little-known in SF fandom, but was a Prime Mover in a number of circles. One of them was Toronto fandom. He helped form the Ontario Science Fiction Club, OSFiC; was a patron of both all three FanFairs run by the club; and performed benevolences too numerous to mention. His major fame was probably in that murky circle of fandom dedicated to old radio programs and pulps. He had once been a local force in comics fandom, and was a leading name in the fandom for horror films of the day.

Captain George, as he fancied himself, ran a junky little nostalgia store called *Memory Lane*. It was in *Mirvish Village*, near *Honest Ed's* giant second-hand emporium. *Memory Lane* was also the headquarters of George's Vast Whizzbang Organization. This consisted mainly of the editorial offices of *The Penny Dreadful* and *The Yellow Journal*, pamphlet size publications with articles by local radio celebrities and pulp collectors. There was a comic-art gallery open to the public in the basement storefront next door, which was the site of many early OSFiC meetings. Long before opening *Memory Lane*, George had run another bookstore, called *Viking Books*, probably not too far from the present location of Bakka on Queen Street.⁵ Like *Rendezvous Books*, *Viking* existed mainly to sell pornography under the counter. Gay pornography in particular. George was even a pioneer in the business of publishing gay smut, though *City Fathers* then frowned much more sternly on moral decay than they do in these enlightened times. George, in fact, fell afoul of certain laws I won't name, and had to meet certain conditions to be released from custody that may have had much to do with his entering a new, innocuous line of business.⁶

But, unlike Hansberger, Capt. George wasn't the center of a cult of hardened debauchees. He might even have been unaware of them, at least until the day George applied to the head branch of the Count Dracula Society to set up a chapter in Canada. After a modicum of publicity, some rather weird people began turning up at meetings. Not the usual sort of macabre story aficionados, but *very weird* people. George's doubts matured during a television interview with a hostile host. The interviewer attacked the Count Dracula Society relentlessly, attacked the literature and *The People Who Read It*. *The People Who Read It*, meanwhile, began to make animal noises from the audience. This was totally unexpected by George. Seeing the leather clad fetishists, the spikes and studded belt-buckles, the glassy eyes with too much make-up, the rude slogans on cardboard and obscene gestures as though for the first time, George suspected the interviewer might actually be right. Was this what he'd started... or merely what George had gotten himself into? The Canadian Count Dracula Society ceased to have any real existence from that day on. It became nothing more than a letterhead that George fondly liked to use.

⁴ I know who, but if he wasn't saying, then I'm not saying. My source is impeccable... he's dead.

⁵ Which is nowhere near the location of Bakka today, or where Bakka has been for several years.

⁶ I could say more, but that's more than a lawyer would say you *need* to know.

With the disappearance of that unlikely focal point, the Weirdoes went underground again, where presumably they degenerated happily for many years. Rumour has it, though, that many of those who turned out for the Dracula Society in the 1960s were the same who approached Bill Grant in the 1940s. But, charming a conceit as it may be, we can dismiss out of hand any thought about the truly Undead. Whether they were one and the same group of zealots or not, neither hide nor hair of them has been seen since.

As with the *Derelict Insurgents*, the kinky tendency of Toronto fandom has shown up again. This fresh contagion takes the form of a number of people who have variously described themselves as comics fans, an SCA group, gamers and, recently, science fiction fans. The evolution is a specious one, though. Their interests have never actually varied. The gaming and medievalism and SF is a thin tissue overlaying a consistent fascination with role-playing and costuming. During their earliest incarnation as comics fans, the boots and tights seemed only a part of the dress-up. Posing as barbarian swordsmen or harem slaves, the jock straps and knives belonged in the game. But, when eventually they took on the guise of SF fans, the bondage paraphernalia was way out of place, even when supposedly play-acting Han Solo or Starbuck. Nobody in the local group wanted to be Speaker-to-Animals, Bilbo Baggins or even C3PO. Why? I think it was because they weren't attracted to SF for the other-worldliness or extrapolation. It was more likely they were into the boots and leather, the knives and guns for their own sake. The common element between these people is a middle-class career and ambitions, from which fandom is a secret escape that they are very careful not to allow to contaminate their mundane lives. They are inherently conservative and frequently come from military families or have spent time in the military themselves. I find them usually reserved and suspicious of strangers. One collects guns. Another shoots animals for sport. Others carry knives openly. Prominent belt buckles, ornamental whips on their walls, and other all-too-familiar signs of fetishism paint a picture of machismo and sublimated violence that I see present in a certain circle of Toronto fandom.

Commenting on the local scene, other Secret Masters of Fandom have agreed with me that, while there are parallels between the obsessive behavior of some present-day Toronto fans and those in the long-ago, the differences are almost equally striking. The current cabal isn't into what might be called aberrant sex... so far as I know. The whips probably stay on the walls, and the leather thongs tie nothing but leather vests together. They are part of the stage-dressing of pretend-kinkiness rather than the real thing. Nor do contemporary fans have the same taste for weird fiction and supernatural tales. But, of course, the genres have changed much since the 1940s and fandom with them. This may explain the less overt sexuality in the cabal's hang-ups, as pistols are less overtly Freudian than vampires. (One is a phallic symbol used in ranking, the other a parody of the sex act itself.)⁷

In spite of this, the resemblance is intriguing. The meaning, less so. I suppose that the consistent quiriness (and querulousness too) are due more to the repressed upbringing and the value of respectability in as Victorian a city as Toronto. It is in the nature of the people to be tight-assed and find-release in private fantasies or debauchery. A less inhibited personality finds expression in more direct sexuality.

⁷ And now vampires are back, and practically The symbol of teenage virility!

Lest the reader object that I'm an odd one to talk, I have no defence. I do hope my outlets are more original than dressing up like a biker or freebooter, though. It is my wish merely to be carried away by a powerful, intelligent member of a semi-human alien species who is for some reason blind to all my flaws. Come to think of it, maybe that's not so very original after all... Let us avert our eyes and take a parting look at Toronto fandom instead.

Some time ago, I was at one of the overblown parties called "Baskon" – after their original host, Marg Baskin. It has been the focal point of local fandom over the last few years. At the height of its popularity, 3 to 6 apartments in the one building were open to Baskon partiers, and well over a hundred people were attending.⁸ Many of them come dressed in their military berets, combat boots, knives and other manly paraphernalia. One youngster sat on a couch, dressed all in black and wearing a bloody big cutting tool on his belt. It looked rather like an SS dagger mated with a machete. Since he seemed preoccupied with a young lady to his right, I reached over and drew it from the scabbard for a closer look. I did expect to raise a conversation from this bold move, but I was surprised by the one that ensued. He was somewhat peeved, naturally. And asked how I could lack the common sense not to draw someone's personal dagger? Among his complaints, he said, "Did you know that what you did was a misdemeanour?"

I presume he meant drawing a knife in public, even though it wasn't my own. Yeah, I had a hunch it was, but added that he wasn't supposed to be carrying it at all if the blade was more than 2 ½ inches long. He was carrying enough steel for nearly three legal blades, I pointed out. He objected at once.

"Carrying a 6-inch knife is not a misdemeanour! It's a felony."

Give me *my* neuroses any day.

2. Parade of Canadian Fanartists, Part 1

New Canadian Fandom 5, Aug 1982

One of the challenges of writing about Canadian fan history is preventing it from becoming a column about Toronto fan history. The two are not synonymous, but until as late as 1975 it isn't hard to mistake one for the other. By far the largest, most varied and most visible fan center in our history, avoiding the pitfall of focusing on Toronto fandom's publications is made almost unavoidable by the facts. There is simply less to write about elsewhere. Furthermore, for this particular historian, the sources are that much more remote for other fan centers than the one I grew up in.

All knowledge is not found in fanzines, contrary to certain authorities who are too much quoted. In fact, damn little information is usually found in fanzines. Rounding out the picture of fandom's past is only possible by interviewing the survivors, and even then the picture that emerges is not the same as the one that would be painted by personal experience. My own pretensions to fan historian status are based on a large collection of

⁸ Most Dittos and many Corflus have been smaller.

fanzines that I acquired virtually by accident. Three or four accidents, even. I've also enjoyed the sympathetic ears of John Millard and P. Howard Lyon. It is possible – with most issues of *CanFan*, *À Bas*, *Wendigo*, *Vanations*, *Canadian Capers*, *Gasp*, *Damn*, *Fie*, *Mimi* and dozens of other, lesser titles from the '40s, '50s and '60s to construct a basic framework – to fill in the blanks by turning to either John or P. Howard. Other veterans of the day are often less cooperative, unfortunately.⁹

When it comes to detailing sketchy events in distant Edmonton or Vancouver of the 1940s, however, I have no witnesses to turn to. No first-hand accounts are at hand. The men behind the names have often vanished, even if distance didn't make it impossible to interview them.

This, to quote a Chinese friend of mine, was a problem.

To write anything at all about Toronto fandom is sticking my neck out – John and P. Howard often contradict each other – to write about the larger stage of Canadian fandom is begging for the axe.

One final difficulty – inevitably, a bias in favour of one thing is a bias against another. By downplaying T.O. so far as I can, I create an impression of a Canadian fandom that never really was as active or as well populated with colourful characters as I may make it seem. The fact remains that Canadian fandom has, through most of its history, involved a limited cast of colourful characters scattered in ones and twos throughout the country, and no fan center ever exceeded a dozen members altogether until modern times. In the background were always a larger number of fans who were never heard from and left almost no mark on history – collectors and readers with no ambition to run clubs, write or publish. Half of Canadian fandom until quite recently always seemed to be in one city – my city. If I seem Toronto-centric, the bias is part of our history.

Among topics I considered for *Same As It Ever Was* were *Canadian Authors I Have Known* and *The First Canadian Worldcon*. The later I'll leave for another time, since – as everyone knows – the first Canadian Worldcon was Torcon I and happened You Know Where. (As did the second.) The first topic was attractive since I could relate a number of amusing anecdotes about Phyllis Gotlieb, John Robert Colombo, Terry Green, Judith Merrill and Donald Kingsbury. But, when I realized that the writers in question would probably not find my stories amusing themselves, and that I had almost nothing to say that would promote their interests, I promptly discovered that there was something else I want to write about all along.

⁹ I had gained a few small pointers from Boyd Raeburn and Don Hutchison, but Boyd is reclusive and hard to talk to unless you belong to his close circle of friends. And Don was quite young at the time. He was not a member of the in-group, nor did he spend long in fandom. Much later, he became one of Capt. George's little group of radio and pulp buffs, and later still edited a number of anthologies of Canadian macabre fiction. I knew where Ron Kidder lived and, by the strangest of coincidences, Ned McKeown – chairman of Torcon I – was one of Mike Glicksohn's superiors in the Toronto Board of Education. Neither gentleman was "available" for interview.

Canadian fanartists. A subject of ever-replenishing entertainment, enlightenment and education that permits me free rein of my opinions and unlimited scope to talk about myself in the guise of talking about other artists.

The first of a distinguished tradition of Canadian fanart was also the first Canadian to publish a fanzine, so far as anyone knows. In *The Immortal Storm*¹⁰, Sam Moskowitz cites Bob Tucker as authority for a claim that the first Canadian fanzine emerged from Vancouver in 1938, with the name Nils Frome on the masthead. It seems that no one now remembers either the title or the content of this seed from which the family tree of Canadian fanzines grew.¹¹ But Frome continued to be an active fan well into the 1940s, as an artist and writer for *Canadian Fandom*. He was one of the two artists who, for the first dozen or so issues, alternated doing *CanFan's* covers. In my opinion, Frome was the better of the two, having a better grasp of anatomy and superior draftsmanship.

Almost nothing can be said about Frome himself. Like most fans of his day, he wrote impersonally and about all that has survived in print about Frome are two addresses. One is a box number in Fraser Mills, BC, and the other Camp 5, Bloedel BC – which leads me to think Frome the Fan was also Frome the Soldier.¹² Because so little can be said about the man, I can only talk about the art.

Like most fanart of the 1940s, it was derivative of pulp illustrators they were familiar with, particularly those from the fantasy magazines. The style was dramatic and brooding, effects achieved by obsessive crosshatching or stippling, and showed a good understanding of lighting. Of the three covers in my possession, two are dominated by huge, moody faces that have real power as a work of art. Generally, I find Frome's work to be less cluttered and claustrophobic than most fantasy art of the time, and more surreal than the illustrations in professional publications. Frome had a genuine talent, and may well have gone on to a career as an artist. Somewhere. But, from the evidence, not in science fiction or fantasy.

Al Betts was the other of the two artists in *CanFan's* stable. More is known about Betts for several reasons, not the least of which is because he was the subject of a "Fan Personality" column in *CanFan* 11. He was "one of Canada's foremost fan artists" according to Anonymous (probably Bill Grant), and technically lived in Toronto. In fact, he was a merchant sailor and was "probably the most widely traveled of Canadian Fen."

¹⁰ A largely unreadable and portentous account of the fan politics in New York leading up to the first Worldcon in 1939. It is reprinted from time to time, but fit only to be read by those desperate to see the petty snipes that passed between Sam Moskowitz, Donald Wollheim, Will Sykora and other amateur politicians first hand. There is very little else to commend it.

¹¹ Much more information on Nils Frome emerged at a later date. I like to think that the effort to retrieve this eo-fan from the mists of prehistory may well have been prompted by this article. What is known about Frome can be read in ----'s excellent article in -----, published in -----. In brief, Frome published two issues of a zine called *Supramundane Stories*, the first in 1936. At least one copy exists. Another 1936 zine called *Canadian Science Fiction Fan* may also have been published by Frome, but it's uncertain.

¹² More likely he was Frome the Unemployed. It was the late years of the Depression, and BC ran what amounted to prison camps for young men without work. They could leave, but not receive any kind of relief outside the work camps. One stayed and worked, or starved.

His record may very well stand.¹³ Betts was in BC for an unspecified time, then moved to Kapuskasing in Northern Ontario in 1946. "Statistics about Al are not available," Anonymous goes on to say, frustrating the historian. But Betts was described as dark, amiable and quiet, fond of jazz and credited with collecting magazines. Nothing whatever is said about his artistic background.

I think it is safe to say that his artistic education could not have been profound. Although his work is not altogether ineffective, it is crude in comparison with Frome's even though it is in much the same style. Betts' work is darker, using solid black backgrounds in all three covers in my possession. Two of the three are disappointingly trite. In one, a devil and a seductress in a pentagram are surrounded by menacing eyes in the dark. In another, a spaceman on the moon wears jodhpurs and a helmet that looks like a vacuum-jar. A cloudless Earth hangs in the background. The third cover almost defies description it is so surrealistic. A creature that appears to be made of dripping tallow clutches a candle in one hand. He has scorpion tails as well. Lighting flashes in the background, lighting abstract mountains. Or are they pyramids? Betts wasn't without talent, but it was either undeveloped or modest. There is no way to know, of course, what became of his abilities after he drifted away from fandom, sometime before 1948.

Both Frome and Betts worked between 1941 and 1948, almost exclusively in the issues of *CanFan* edited by Beak Taylor. When *CanFan* changed hands, after Torcon I, it seemed to be a signal for many other changes in Canadian fandom as well. Neither artist appeared in the zine under the new editor, Ned McKeown, nor anywhere else, to my knowledge.

But *CanFan* in the late '40s was no longer the only voice of Canadian fandom.

Fred Hurter's *Censored* actually precedes *CanFan* in seniority, and while it was obscure in the extreme, note must be made of the gorgeously effective silk-screened covers produced by Hurter and Ron Smith. I presume Smith is the artist. The art's solid blocks of black and colour made powerful images, at the very least. Like much primitivist art, its absent draftsmanship is far from the point.

Two issues of another Toronto zine, *Macabre*, introduced two new, promising artists in 1948.¹⁴ The editors were Joe Doherty and Don Hutchison. They were their own illustrators, and varied in quality from bad to surprisingly decent. Both were clearly unprofessional, Hutchison at least had the glimmerings of talent. But the two issues of *Macabre* produced before they vanished from fandom gave the artists little time for development.

Fred Hurter moved from Aurora, north of Toronto, to Montreal, where he briefly revived *Censored*. Then he too disappeared.

¹³ Although Toronto fantasy writer Tanya Huff was for a time in the Canadian Navy...

¹⁴ Both issue of *Macabre* are downloadable in entirety at <http://efanzines.com/Macabre/index.htm>. I have also written for them a short introduction.

Don Hutchison, however, is one of the few old-time Canadian fans to reappear after having vanished so utterly. He unearthed himself in the late 1960s long enough to contribute to early OSFiC zines, and to write for Capt. George's various radio, pulp, comic and horror publications. Don has been less active in fandom since then, and is often out of the country in his profession as a freelance film cameraman.¹⁵ Now and then his reviews in *Captain George's Penny Dreadful* are quoted on paperbacks.

Les Croutch's *Light* was prominent among Canadian fanzines for many years... but never a showcase, judging by contemporary opinion and from issues I've seen. Nevertheless, *Light* featured two artists worth noting. The better of the two was **Bob Gibson**, who is listed in the masthead as "art staff." To my knowledge, his first appearance was in 1944, when Croutch began mimeoing his want-list of books, renumbered it and named it *Light*. Gibson did most of Croutch's covers for the next several years. There is a pause in 1948, when *Light* went coverless, but the artist only drops from sight entirely in 1951.

All the art was drawn on stencil with tools that scratched and scraped the wax. It is not overly bad, but difficult to describe since stencil techniques tend to limit what the artist can do, erasing differences in style. Gibson's ideas were usually good, and his skills adequate to execute them. A Cyclopean creature on the cover of *Light* 33 shows the artist at his best, as does an inside page in number 34, that illustrates what waits for you to strike a match in the dark, and a cover on issue 46 of a fan trapped in a maelstrom of fanzines. They also show the wide range of subject matter Gibson was willing to illustrate. Aside from covers and some full-page illustrations, Gibson also drew cartoon pages, marginalia to fill corners and most of *Light*'s logos (that Croutch didn't do himself). Like his major work, Gibson's skills were appropriate more than remarkable.

Bob Gibson's partner on the *Light* art staff was John Cockcroft. Cockcroft had the distinction of appearing on *Light*'s only known offset cover. He was plainly less talented than his partner, though. The figure of Cthulhu on the offset cover is neither original in design nor well executed. Dark, and lavishly textured, his work tends to obscure itself in unimportant detail - a common failing of most magazine illustration of the time, actually. Poor perspectives left Cockcroft's work flat. Unartful compositions made it uninteresting.

Fandom in Canada came to a virtual standstill after the Torcon, and CanFan showed its face but twice in more than five years. Everything else but *Light* had disappeared. Fanac picked up again in 1953 when McKeown gave *CanFan* over to Gerald Steward. Another new face, William D. Grant, was immediately harnessed to do much-needed covers. He drew the majority of them from that point. He was not a technically brilliant artist, but, like Gibson, he had mastered the tricky process of on-stencil drawing, and had a flair for design that was wholly his own. His straightforward draftsman-like style was adequate for portraits, such as the one he drew of Lovecraft, and for transcribing photographs to stencil. One of his favourite stocks-in-trade was calendar girls, probably also copies from

¹⁵ As mentioned earlier, Don edited several anthologies of Canadian dark fantasy after retirement - *Northern Frights*.

photos, or even from calendars. Otherwise lackluster drawings were transformed for *CanFan's* benefit by the shrewd application of modernist design elements; frames of different sizes and shapes that overlapped and balanced abstractly, titles used like lay-out blocks, and graphics accents. That even his worst cover, a badly executed drawing of robots on the moon, is not irredeemable is due to Grant's design sense. Steward only published *CanFan* himself for a single year, and passed it on to Grant, who published it for the next four years, at increasingly infrequent intervals and increasingly as a personalzine. Grant died in 1978. No Gerald A. Steward appears in the Toronto phonebook.

One other noteworthy artist emerged in the pages of *CanFan*, and she was altogether the most original artist in Canadian fandom until that time. Although married to P. Howard Lyons, she signed herself Pat Patterson. Drawing in thin lines that could be tense or fluid from piece to piece, or even line to line, her work could suggest energy either in motion or coiled-up like a spring waiting to be sprung. Figures were often skeletal or grotesque, with expression of advanced psychosis the norm. Easy to reproduce, Patterson's work appeared in several different Canadian zines – *CanFan*, *À Bas*, *Gasp* and *Ibidem* primarily – but appeared infrequently out of the county. It will turn up, though, in searches through *Inside* and Harry Turner's zines from the UK. Her one professional appearance was for Damon Knight. She illustrated his *In Search of Wonder* for *Advent Press*, and even designed the publisher's logo. Pat Patterson aka Pat Lyons currently works in sculpture.

In the early mid-50s, two fans two thousand miles apart formed a productive partnership. Harry Calnek of Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia wrote for **Georgina Ellis** in Calgary, and published her artwork in his own zines, *Canadian Capers* and *Fie*. Gina, meanwhile drew on-stencil for her own *Mimi* and *Wendigo*. While Calnek drew also, it was Gina who had talent, exposure to modern art which showed in some of her surreal or cubist illos, and more than one style. Her work was not signed consistently. Sometimes she signed herself "D.D.," sometimes "Dutch," "Ellis" or even "Sali Dali." Nevertheless, her style was usually identifiable. Her crayon or pencil drawings for Calnek couldn't be reproduced except by offset and dot-screen. Her on-stencil illos are less readily identified and are in a "pretty" style somewhat reminiscent of the long, limpid women drawn more recently by Bjo Trimble. Gina and Harry, with Norm Clarke in Aylmer, Ontario, formed the first prominent Canadian fan group that was self-sufficient and independent of Toronto. Later, when the 1950s and the *CanFan* era drew to a close, Gina married Norm. Later in the 1960s they moved to Ottawa, where Gina lives to this day. Her present activities include a lively interest in folk music and feminism. Gina is a member of A Woman's Apa.

By 1960, Canadian fandom was nearly as thin on the ground as it had been in 1950, with very little visible fanac, and most of the fans having absented themselves for good. Faint echoes could be found in *FAPA*, *SAPS* and *The Cult* – if you were a member. There was a short-lived semi-pro humour magazine published in Toronto, whose editor was an

associate of Boyd Raeburn's.¹⁶ Norm Clarke published at least four issues of *Honque* by 1965, but none were much distinguished for their art, nor was Paul Wyskowski's zine, *Differential*, last seen in 1966. Paul did his own illustration, and was indifferent to bad, with a sense of design he used occasionally to good effect, but not nearly often enough. More often, he resorted to the kind of stfnal cheesecake more typical of 1940s magazine SF than fanart of the '60s.

However, the release of *2001: A Space Odyssey* seemed to germinate a new seed. It began to send shoots up in 1967 in a number of places. Two clubs were founded with a couple of years of each other at either end of the country – OSFiC in Toronto, and BCSFA in Vancouver, shortly followed by ACUSFOOS in Ottawa, and transitory clubs on campuses in Kingston and Halifax. The new fan centers produced fanzines, fanwriters and, of course, also fanartists.

In Toronto, OSFiC was publishing a middling-good fanzine on a fairly regular basis by 1968, that survived until 1971. **Paul Docherty** was a native Torontonion who illustrated a number of the club's early fanzines and newsletters. His work had an air of symbolism about it – for example, Fate turning the Wheel of Destiny (men falling as it circled), or God with the Universe held in his hands. In spite of defective execution, these pictures worked pretty well. Perhaps Docherty's sense of purpose carried them off rather than his sense of design.

Dave Price's wandering lines suggested forms embedded in a collage rather than a clearly depicted object. It was as if space did not exist and all things were one with a continuous fabric. The wing of a pterodactyl would also be the left side of a Queen Street streetcar, and at the same time it was the border of the face of Neil Armstrong. It was psychedelic art without colour, a sophisticated but unfamiliar intrusion in the more literal world of fanart that has been forgotten.

Vaughn Fraser was a student of York University in North Toronto at the time, who was a member of a large comics group there. His brother, Rod, began *Fantarama*, which, as of this writing, Fraser still publishes. Much of Fraser's artwork found its way into *Fantarama*, and into apazines for *Canadapa*. He had created the apa for Canadian fans as early as 1972, and remained OE for a number of years after leaving Toronto for Vancouver. At best, his work can be described as playful, but it was a long way short of professional – his real ability lay in publishing. Despite *Canadapa's* crossover with SF, Fraser was first of all a comics fan. There were a number of others in the York University group who remained purely comics, who I'll only mention in passing – Ron Sutton, Dean Motter, Paul Savard, Ron Kasman, Tom Robe, John Allison, and Paul Rivoche. They all went their separate ways when the university group broke up, some pursuing careers in comics, others in illustration or photography. Sutton and Kasman did a little work for David Hull's Owen Sound fanzine, *Rothnium*, though. Another comics artist was Ron

¹⁶ Panic Button, by Les Nirenberg. It had begun as a humble fanzine called *Que Pasada*, changed to *Vahana* for one issue, and by issue 7 it have become *Panic Button*, and aimed for a wider readership as a humour magazine. It lasted only 16 issues, the last in 1964.

van Leeuwen, who specialized in wall-sized paintings of Conan the Barbarian, or Carl Barks subjects. But he seems to have given up art when he went into partnership with Charlie McKee to manage *Bakka*, the first SF bookstore in Canada. Later, he opened his own comics specialty store, *The Silver Snail*.¹⁷ Most of the others formed a coterie of artists around *Bakka*, doing posters, flyers, bookmarks and illos for both the store and McKee's *Bakka Magazine*. When Van Leeuwen left to launch *The Silver Snail*, most of the same artists worked on *Andromeda*, the *Snail's* comic magazine.

Several zines were coming out of Ottawa as early as 1968. Among them was *Hugin & Munin*, published by Richard Labonté. *HaM* was the sole vehicle for little-remembered artist Murray Long. Long did several covers for Labonté that were executed in a bold style, probably by brush, but curiously resemble tile cuts. They were not actually horrible, while his interior illos, drawn on-stencil, were altogether quite horrible. Labonté said of Long that he was not a fan.

At about the same time as *HaM*, Ralph Alphonso and Cliff Letovsky published *Le Beaver*, a media-oriented, but still fannish zine, that they both had a hand in illustrating. Neither of them was especially talented, but Ralph had verve – you would always *look* at it – and a certain amount of wit that Cliff lacked. Ken Steacy was a friend of theirs who did additional illos for *LeB*, as well as other titles that Ralph and Cliff published between them. He was a basic comics fan artist at the time – uninteresting superheroes and passable cartoons, indifferently rendered.

The major fanartists in Canada in the late 1960s and early '70s were **Alicia Austin** and Derek Carter. Austin was not a native Canadian. She was born in the U.S., but was working in Ottawa when she met Rosemary Ulliyot and Maureen Bournes around 1968, and the three of them began a *Star Trek* fanzine. *Kevas & Trillium* only lasted a couple of years, as Austin left Canada for California around 1970. Though she spent a relatively brief time illustrating for fanzines, her work appeared in most of the classic genzines that nearly define what a genzine is – *Granfalloon*, *Energumen*, *Carandaith*, *Outworlds*, *Science Fiction Review* and many others. Alicia Austin was regarded as belonging to the top rank, along with fanartists such as Grant Canfield, Tim Kirk, Steven Fabian and George Barr. As such, she won the fanart Hugo in 1971, at Noreascon – *at that time* it would have been mainly for work she did in *Energumen* and while living in Canada. While Austin studied biology and trained as a lab technician, she makes her living as a freelance artist, and has illustrated at least two books for the publisher, Donald Grant, and was the subject of yet a third.

Stylistically, Austin owes much to Aubrey Beardsley, a popular illustrator from just before the turn-of-the-century. She works in the same flat, designerly, Oriental influenced style that was popular in the Mauve Age. But, unlike Beardsley, Austin prefers attractive fantasy themes to evil, leering faces or phallic excesses. Another

¹⁷ He is said to have become quite rich, not so much from the store as from his distribution company. Van Leeuwen himself is said to have tired of comics, and is reported as saying, "I made millions selling shit to moron."

difference is that Austin steps back, artistically, from Beardsley's intensely personal and sometimes non-representational subjects. His work was not totally abstract, but neither could one describe such images as taken from life. Austin's art is also mannered, but clearly represents believable people and costumes. The designerly elements are backdrops, or relegated to patterned clothing – people and scenery are not used as blocks of contrasting detail or spaces, manipulated to nearly the same degree as problems in balance that Beardsley does. Insofar as there are these differences, Austin is not a mere imitator of her 19th-century predecessor. But also, these differences make Austin a far more conservative artist. Curiously enough, her debt to Beardsley is so great that, like him, her art has a "Savoy" period. Beardsley began to illustrate in a far more realistic fashion just before his death, and like her mentor, the parlour realism didn't suit Austin very well either.

End of Part One

3. Parade of Canadian Fanartists, Part 2

New Canadian Fandom 7, April 1985

Derek Carter, another non-Canadian by birth, immigrated to Canada from Britain in the late 1960s, and was drawn into OSFiC by a mutual acquaintance. His first work was done for the OSFiC clubzine, but he quickly caught on throughout fandom, his gnomish village scenes and Rube Goldberg contraptions appearing in *Energumen*, *BeaboHEMA*, *Outworlds*, *Granfalloon* and many of the honour roll of that generation of fanzines. In his mid-thirties now, like Austin, he is different in being employed in the animation business after a short career as a freelancer. After leaving Toronto, he lived in Chicago a number of years, and after more travel seems to have settled in California. He was active in fandom twice, actually: originally, from 1968 or so until 1973. After a couple of years he made a comeback for a few friends between 1975 and 1976. It was his first stint in fandom that won him his first and only nomination for a Hugo.

Stylistically, Carter is reminiscent of Bodē when cartooning, but in fact he admits to owing more to a British artist of Children's fantasy. Carter had a knack for three sorts of things, primarily – people and creatures who were all head, hands and feet, set in a world called Jabberwich; outlandish dirigibles, steam driven land-battleships, roc-drawn air-trains, gopher-powered cyclotrons and whatever else his imagination could construct from an attic of unlikely, cast-off materials;¹⁸ and military history. Naturally, his interest in obsolete technology and the military overlapped. A curious piece of 19th century brasswork on an instrument that could as easily be a pressure gauge on a boiler as a speed indicator on the bridge of a dreadnaught. Carter shared with Bodē a bold line, and could use solid blacks and whites effectively. However, as time went by, it appears that

¹⁸ Primordial steampunk, in effect. Perhaps it has been forgotten that the steampunk sensibility clearly comes down to us from the rediscovery of turn-of-the-century technology and fashions by 1960s counter-culture?

Carter no longer felt it worth going to the trouble of using a particularly careful style for fanzines, and more often dashed his illos off with a thin, scribbly line. His lines became thinner, almost certainly because he had switched from a brush to pen or magic marker.

During Carter's second stay in fandom, he showed further changes of style and content. His older interests are absent. On the one hand, Carter continued his quick, inferior style for cartoons that were possibly scribbled on napkins and not meant for publication. On the other hand, some of his quick sketches showed more care than others, and possess a lineal relationship to Carter's Jabberwich. Although no longer as bold or dramatic as it was before, Carter's late fanart was sometimes very detailed and could still produce pleasing results. Derek Carter dropped out of fandom entirely after his marriage, but the covers he still contributed to Mike Glicksohn's *Xenium* on occasion are among his best.¹⁹

In 1972, *Bakka* Bookstore held an open-air art show. Two of the artists represented in the show were top-notch, but unfortunately contributed very little to the fan press. I discuss them briefly out of a sense of completeness, and because of their later careers.

Jon Lomberg worked in visual puns – radio telescopes that broadcast beams of DNA molecules to the sky, or a swath of the Milky Way in the sky that look strangely like a human backbone. Lomberg was once moved by Olaf Stapledon to calibrate a drawing of a spiral shell with “numbered men.” He had been doing shows for years, but his break came when Carl Sagan visited *Bakka* and fell in love with Lomberg's work there. Since then, the artist's fortunes have expanded enormously. He worked on the Cosmos series, and several of his ink drawings appeared in Sagan's *The Cosmic Connection*.²⁰ A little of Lomberg's art appeared in convention publications in Toronto, but almost nowhere else.

Robert MacIntyre, aka “mac-an-t-saoir,” was an artist who took Virgil Finlay a step farther. Finlay's familiar stippling technique was developed in MacIntyre's hands to such an extreme it is virtually Pointillism in black & white. But where the pulp artist illustrated straightforward action or exotic seductresses – and Steve Fabian pretty much the same – McIntyre used his masterful technique to probe the depths of his id... and a highly disturbing id he had, a-swim with gravestones, crying infants and Nazi uniforms. At other times, McIntyre was content with less sinister and even appealing, subject matter. A woman swimming in a sea of stars, for example, slashing them to the sky. With fandom behind him, McIntyre went on to illustrate a Robert E. Howard collection published by Donald Grant, and is reputedly working on another.

Tim Hammell has long been the premier fanartist of the Canadian West Coast, and lives in Vancouver. Hammell has never been widely appreciated elsewhere in fandom, most likely because the artist has never been very interested in fandom except the local club. Most of his work has appeared in various Vancouver zines, many of which were about

¹⁹ Derek Carter very much disliked being associated in any way with fandom, in fact. His few fannish friends were silent about Carter's doings or whereabouts, and would provide no information for my articles. In spite of which I've seen his name in the credits after animated films over the years, so have a pretty good idea what he's been up to.

²⁰ In later years, Lomberg was commissioned by NASA, no less. Last that I heard he lived in Hawaii.

comics, gaming and the media. If it hadn't been for BCSFA's newsletters, Mike Bailey's many different titles and various con publications, SF fandom would have had little opportunity to see Hammell's work. But he appeared once in Andy Porter's *Starship*, and did a cover once for the Quebec semi-pro magazine, *Borealis*. Much of Hammell's popularity on the west coast is due to his presence in convention art shows, and has a reputation for libidinous qualities that are readily apparent in large breasted virgins, leather fetishism and phallic fantasies that he does for his friends' amusement. His fascination with *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and other forms of mannered decadence is the most obvious manifestation.

But Hammell displays a bewildering variety of styles that makes it almost impossible to pigeonhole his work or typecast the man. The majority of Hammell's art is slick, almost glib, and little individuality shows through his technical excellence. He seems content to satisfy the demands of his editor in most cases... though it is entirely possible this aim simply isn't in conflict with his Muse. Regardless of whether or not Hammell's work is impersonally wrought, he is undeniably skillful, and has produced many beautiful showpieces. After close involvement with Vancouver fandom for two or three years, Hammell faded from the scene. He moved to Edmonton where he pursued a career in commercial art.

Tim has a brother, Dale, who was less known even on the West Coast. I only recall having seen his work only in Vaughn Fraser's *Fantarama*, but it's not unlikely that he has contributed to other local zines, especially to comics or media zines I would know nothing about. The little of his work I've seen shows him to be an able cartoonist.

There are almost certainly other Canadian fanartists associated with media, comics, gaming, Trek and other diverse interests. But though I've plenty of names to choose from, there's no way I can guess which are Canadian and which are American from where I sit, typing. Strictly speaking, they don't fall into my definition of SF fanartists anyway.

The work of **Barry Kent MacKay** (pronounced Mac-Eye) began appearing in OSFiC clubzines as early as 1972. But the old OSFiC died with Torcon II, and delayed his full introduction to fandom for another couple of years. By 1975, he was being published again in the local monthly and one-shots, but also began sending huge batches of his cartoons to fan editors practically all over the planet. Professionally, Barry is a naturalist painter, specializing in birds, but will illustrate other wildlife if that's in the job description. Barry appears from time to time on a local toddler's talk show, *Uncle Bobby*, and teaches pre-schoolers a little about nature while he draws animals. He writes a regular column for the *Toronto Star* newspaper, as well. Paintings and ink drawings by Barry have illustrated magazines, and several books on the birds of North America, moreover, his paintings are on display at the Metro Toronto Zoo.

For three or four years his output was prodigious... then he just stopped, as Barry found it necessary to meet more and more demands on his time. During those years, though,

almost every North American and many overseas fanzines carried work of his. It varied considerably in quality. Some was utterly professional. But, strangely, as superb as his renderings of a bobolink or a common muskrat were, Barry wasn't as well versed with human anatomy. Most of his two legged characters – whether leprechauns or barbarian princesses – were in need of more practice. There was a problem with the sheer volume of his output as well. Regardless of how fresh and original his hallmark illos were at first – little spacemen with huge helmets, Rube Goldberg-like *critters* and grotesque faces – their originality diminished with repetition, and lost the power to arrest the eye. After an initial wave of popularity, illos signed B.K.M. (with a little bird tagged on the end) became a drag on the market. Every faneditor had a shoebox full of them, and more arrived faster than it could be used up.

On occasion, Barry's work went beyond good and was simply gorgeous. A pair of covers he did for the last issue of Victoria Vayne's *Simulacrum*, for instance, are probably the best work he has done in fandom and that he wasn't paid four figures for. He also painted for one fanzine a particularly lovely winged horse. Some years later, Barry showed renewed signs of getting back into fandom. When he isn't busy, he relaxes with casual drawing and has started to send out packages again.²¹

A number of other fanartists flourished during OSFiC's middle years, when the club was on its feet again after Torcon (until it petered out again after a few years and began its "late" period). David Starr, then 11 years old, drew primitivist, turbulent abstracts that suggested a talent on the rise. But his cartoons and straight-forward drawings needed a great deal more practice that he never got once he drifted away from fandom, three or four years later.

Elizabeth Pearse breezed into OSFiC with a neo-like enthusiasm but of advanced years. She arrived like the Mongol horde but found the club too confining, and returned to the remote steppes of Mississauga, west of Toronto, to found her own film and media club. The first fanart of hers that I was aware of was published on the back of a monster movie zine. It was a charcoal portrait of a famous actor playing Dracula,²² and, for what it was, quite good. Pearse claimed to have taken lessons in painting from Kelly Freas. Once introduced to SF fandom, she began to do pen and ink drawings for her own club's monthly newszines, as well as a few media zines and Trekzines. But her main interest at that point wasn't art or fanzines so much as artshows. She built her own organization to run them and for many years was a fixture at local conventions. Pearse ran the artshow for at least one Worldcon, a Chicon.

²¹ Unfortunately, his comeback ended before it had really begun. Having spare time on his hands had only been a temporary condition. Barry Kent MacKay still lives north of Toronto but is largely retired now. His days as a columnist are long over, and he lives mainly by doing private commissions. Now and then I phone and we have a long chat about the "old" days.

²² The portrait led to an amusing incident. When Pearse was showing it at an OSFiC meeting, she said "This is who oi am," in a genuine Australian accent. One of our members, Janet Small (Janet Wilson) gave a loud answer, "Christopher Lee?" And Janet to this day says that *I'm* indiscrete!

Her own art was neither particularly good nor remarkably bad. It was an awful lot like all those other portraits of Spock or Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster that you see in media zines, for the simple reason that it was copied from the same publicity photos. It didn't show much imagination, a virtue that will often save an indifferent artist. Nevertheless, Pearse was a successful popularizer of fandom, offering encouragement to armies of neos, with predictably mixed results. (Among them, the belief that all genres are fannish.)

Neither Bob Wilson nor Phil Paine claimed to be artists at all, but *did* have the imagination to be worth mention. Their virtues were limited to a good sense of design and to offbeat humour - while they had the talent, they lacked ability to make the best of it. Their idiosyncratic cartoons could be used to brighten up any text, but was most often found in their own idiosyncratic fanzines outside of OSFiC's.

Henry Argasinski was the joker in a deck - a neofan with an avowed admiration for Claude Degler. No one was sure he even knew exactly who Claude Degler is, or whether to take Argasinski seriously. As both a faneditor and especially a fanartist, he was derivative, copying closely from Bodē, Rotsler, even me (since I unwisely contributed to Henry's first fanzines). Argasinski was mainly self-published, but some of his drawings turn up in OSFiC zines of the late 1970s.²³

David Starr's fledging career as a fanartist ended during one of OSFiC's periodic "downs," Bob Wilson²⁴ and Phil Paine stopped doodling about the time they stopped publishing their apa-and-personalzines, and while the New Derelicts were in the process of dissolution around 1978 or 1979. Elizabeth Pearse drew back from fandom after a serious financial setback suffered by one of her conventions, and thereafter only worked on *other* people's cons. Argasinski's ambitions in fandom almost certainly vanished like smoke rings with a doctor's prescription for Valium.

Taral Wayne... I don't intend to talk about myself in any more detail than anyone else. I've talked at length about myself before and will do it again, but not here. Briefly, though, I was a bit slow getting my drawings into fanzines, not making much headway outside of the local clubzine until about 1975. Most fanartists seem to make their appearance in fandom while already about as good as they will ever get - attesting to short stays, as much as anything. I was an exception. For better or worse, the years I've been in fandom record my progress as an artist, as well as my many mistakes. Early work of mine is clumsy and the lack of proper training obvious. I only thought of myself as an artist at all after I had been published in a few places like Mike Glycer's *Prehensile*, and had been used by *Torcon*. I published quite a lot of my own work at first, in clubzines, then in my own zines. My pen style didn't make it easy for anyone to use my work, because I used a ballpoint pen to create shades of grey, rather as George Barr did. (Not that there was any *other* similarity.) The printed result was often hideous. A lot of

²³ Interestingly, although Argasinski moved to the US long ago, his business site has the same name as his first fanzine.

²⁴ Bob, aka Robert Charles Wilson, has better things to do, but tosses a few off now and then to amuse himself.

the time, I also used for inspiration a complicated make-believe world that evidently had limited appeal. If you were to browse the top-rated fanzines of the 1970s, I'm afraid you'd find little of my work in them. I was mainly published in the second-string zines of the time.

My style doesn't consciously draw on any one source, but doubtless I've borrowed what I like from a variety of sources, from Curt Swann to Will Elder. I favour thin, very controlled lines, treating them almost as obstacles to overcome. Although aware of the usefulness of bold strokes, I tend to avoid them. Drawing with a ballpoint pen rather than a brush is most likely what's shaped my art the way it is. I'm very concerned with balance and composition, and use detail as well as solids to create visual "weight." Perspective and space are important elements as well. A device I almost always fall back on is self-reference. Most of my art, it has been said, is "in repose" rather than in motion. Even when depicting action, I still tend to produce something that looks posed. According to fanartist David Vereschagin, I "over-intellectualize." Probably true. I spend about half my time staring at the paper, trying to picture what should go on it.²⁵ Since the '70s my art has spread to a larger number and better class of fanzines, and I've even been nominated for the Hugo. So far, I'm the only Canadian fanartist who has been other than (arguably) Alicia Austin back in the '60s.

Stuart Gilson was "discovered" among the ranks of Decadent Winnipeg Fandom in 1975, when the first issue of Randy Reichardt's *Winding Numbers* arrived in mailboxes. Gilson's output wasn't large, but he contributed fairly widely for the three years or so that he was active, including to other Canadian zines like *Simulacrum*, and US zines like *Scientifriction*. But after a relatively short span of time, Gilson disappeared without a trace, after DWF broke up, into the Ottawa bureaucracy as an economist. A handful of drawings from various backlogs continued to appear from time to time for another couple of years.

Following tradition for Canadian fanartists, Gilson didn't score high on points for draughtsmanship, but had flair and good design sense. His drawings were heavily textured with crosshatches, dots, lines and solid masses of both black and white. They could alternate like a quilt. Among so much visual variety, figures did tend to become somewhat lost. It was possible to confuse foreground with background. But, one might as well fault the Bayeaux Tapestry for its lack of perspective. In spite of small technical weaknesses, Gilson's work was always interesting to look at. That, after all, is what art is all about. No criticism can be levelled at Gilson's cover for *Simulacrum 3*, for instance. Though simple, it one of the most effective covers *Simulacrum* has had. Aside from fantasy illustrations, Gilson also cartooned. These were generally a little less successful, but distinctive, at least. In the end, not very much more can be said about Stu Gilson's art, because his time in fandom was unfortunately rather short. Had he remained

²⁵ This is probably the most thoroughly rewritten part of the article. Mainly because, in spite of my intentions, it was too damn long, and I've shortened it by half! If you want to know more about what I did after this history was written, in 1985, read "In Twiltone Yet Green," "Better Than Life," "I Should'a Been..." or some other piece I later wrote about myself.

another few years, he would have unquestionably been one of the country's most memorable fanartists.

Winnipeg artist **Roldo** deserves honourable mention for providing some issues of Garth Danielson's many controversial zines²⁶ with balm for the eyes. His style is heavy on the brush, rough-hewn and comic, though one 1978 issue of *Boowatt* had front and back covers airbrushed by Roldo in colour. The artist seemed to find some of his ideas in *Sword & Sorcery*, and derived his style from comic books. Apart from a cover for Mike Hall's *Schmagg* and work in George Giguere's *Compound Fracture*, Roldo appears only to have contributed to a comics zine of his own.

David Vereschagin appeared on the Canadian fannish horizon in 1976, rising over New Saerepta, Alberta in the pages of a one-shot fanzine called *Antares*. Differences in opinion with the co-editor prevented there being a second issue, and it took over a year for Vereschagin to reappear in his own *White Space* in 1978. Before it could have a second issue, *White Space* was followed by other, shorter, informal personalzines. But it had served the function of introducing a second Edmonton area fanartist, John Durno.

Vereschagin contributed his angular, modernistic cartoons and abstracts profligately for about a year. Then, reacting to a less than enthusiastic reception from some quarters, the supply dried up and Vereschagin began a slow withdrawal from fanzine fandom. He took his turn, twice yearly, editing *The Monthly Monthly* and deserves much of the credit for the zine's usual crisp appearance. He also founded the absurdist Edmonton apa, *Dadapa*. But, by 1980's end, Vereschagin can be said to have gafiated. He claimed several unpleasant experiences during his stay in fandom, such as the extreme reaction to a series of panels he drew as "instructions" to drown a cat. Perhaps he was over sensitive to criticism, but these incidents seem to have hurried his gafiation. There was no question, though, that Vereschagin drew to deliberately provoke a reaction! (*Thought* rather than *anger*, however.) His art school training had no doubt exposed him to a wider world of styles, techniques and avant-garde culture. He brought his experience with him, to Edmonton fandom's advantage, but he also seemed to bring with him an impatience with those who wouldn't keep up.

Vereschagin never limited himself to a single style. Nevertheless, his illos were usually done with geometrical clean lines and flourishes. A breeze of dadaistic thought blew through them; perhaps a hint of Mondrian in the layout as well. But, possibly, it's a mistake to analyze Vereschagin's work too deeply. As an artist he claimed to strive for a surrealist's lack of self-consciousness, which would preclude forethought. Whether or not he tried not to think about what he was doing, Vereschagin's drive to experiment and to be different, marked him as an intellectual among fanartists.

²⁶ Danielson's *Boowatt* and other titles were controversial inasmuch as they were quite likely the consistently ugliest fanzines ever published. Almost all issues were extraordinarily badly mimeographed on the reverse side of old forms and office memos that Danielson took home from work. Some people didn't mind, as long as they enjoyed what Danielson wrote, others complained they simply couldn't read it.

John Durno, mentioned earlier, first appeared in the pages of *White Space* along with David Vereschagin. He also contributed to early issues of *The ESFCAS Newsletter*, before it was renamed *Neology*. In the same year, Durno published the first, and only, issue of his own fanzine, *Old Zing*. Since then, he's been a regular contributor to other Gang of Four zines – *The Monthly Monthly*, *The Bimonthly Monthly* and *New Canadian Fandom*. As an artist, his style is complimentary to Vereschagin's, the two being somewhat similar. Durno's is the less offbeat, but perhaps the more fan oriented.

Toronto fandom has lately sprouted yet another crop of new fanartists, no doubt because continual publishing activity of one sort or another draws them out of their cliques and from convention artshows that would otherwise conceal them. Kevin Davies is the most visible, largely because his work appears in *Miriad*, a 5,000-copy circulation semi-pro that he co-edits. Deriving his basic style from Marvel comics, Davies has shown ability at other forms of imitation as well, but doesn't seem to have found an idiom of his own. His strengths are composition and colour; his weaknesses are anatomy and the lack of an inner vision. By far, his best fan work was done for the one-shot *Energumen 16*, published by Mike Glicksohn in honour of Susan Wood. In a way, the generic quality of the work succeeds because it is universal in its appeal.²⁷

Adam Smith was co-editor of *Miriad* with Kevin Davies. He drew machine-things, mechanical animals and robotic-looking people in a very precise, draughtsman-like way that was perfect for gaming manuals. The oddly machine-like quality seemed to match the artist as well. Smith's work has only appeared in early issues of *Miriad*, his personalzine *Nuclear Bunnies* and in a local Dr. Who zine. Smith's girlfriend, Julie Lewis, was a talented artist in her own right, but has never been published in fanzines.

Other minor local artists have drawn covers for the Toronto apa, or done spot illos for OSFiC newsletters, but as this was their only exposure in fandom, they can be passed over.

In Vancouver, a number of newer names have turned up in BCSFA newsletters of late. Only one, I think, appears often enough to warrant mention – Lari Davidson. Others appear to be acquaintances of Vaughn Fraser's, who I assume brought them into the club from comics fandom during his tenure as newsletter editor. Similarly, a local artist or two has recently decorated ESFCAS's Neologies from time to time, but no-one worthy of note. In Calgary, Bob Gibson has done local work since NonCon 4, at least. But so far the newer artists have done nothing to warrant a larger place in this history. It isn't so much a lack of ability on their part as a lack of ambition and opportunity – a two-fold failing that can in general, perhaps, describe most fanartists to come along in recent years.

Certain prejudices, by now, ought to be apparent to the reader. Some are personal and reduce to taste in art. One fan may detest Derek Carter and exult in Alicia Austin. *De*

²⁷ I've met Kevin now and then over the years. From what I've gathered, he became a commercial freelancer, and specialized in gaming. His biggest contribution was almost certainly the spiffy store sign he painted for Bakka and hung over the store for many years.

gustibus non disputandum said Mike Glicksohn once, sending me to a Latin dictionary. At some level, though, it isn't only a matter of taste. Alicia Austin was objectively a better artist than Stuart Gilson, and any opinion to the contrary is beyond rational discussion. On the other hand, whether you prefer Stu Gilson to Tim Hammell is one fan's opinion. Though both are talented, Pat Patterson almost certainly made a greater impression on fanzines than David Vereschagin. I've tried to treat the artists in greater or lesser detail on that basis.

Other prejudices in this history are systematic. I haven't attempted to discuss convention artists, largely because to do so is impossible. They don't leave a trail that can be followed by later historians. You were there and saw the show or you didn't. But, also because I don't think an artist who has never been published in a fanzine is altogether a fanartist. Plenty of freelancers do the circuit of SF, fantasy, comics, Wicca, SCA, Who, Trek, and media artshows for a living... but does it necessarily make them fans, or just enterprising? Many will disagree with me on this ruling, I don't doubt, and they're free to write their own, immensely longer history that includes all the hundreds of artists who have ever hung a piece at Vcon or Ad Astra. I think they will find it overwhelming, and probably pointless to boot.²⁸

Conceivably, someone who has attended nearly every Canadian convention, every year, could write such an expanded history of Canadian fanart, but *there is no such person*. Nor could there be. By contrast, the illustrations found in fanzines – limited to black and white, often scratched by the editor on wax stencils and ditto masters and then poorly reproduced – nevertheless leave a record behind for the fanhistorian to discover. And once discovered, it can be shared with other fans interested in what went before. The subject is finite and source material at hand. It is also of personal interest to me, insofar as I've collected old fanzines and contributed to many of them myself. I have no such passion about selling portraits of Spock or knock-offs of Hildebrandt Brothers covers at conventions, and there is nothing about panels of bid sheets that I want to share with the reader. What I hope I have shared is my conviction that fanzines matter, and that the people who illustrated them over the years matter every bit as much as the fans who wrote for and published over 50 years of fanzines.²⁹

4. The Canadian Science Fiction Association: CSFA³⁰

New Canadian Fandom 8, Oct 1985

In an issue of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association's newsletter (BCSFazine 136), the editor Gerald Boyko reviewed Jack Bowie-Reed's *The History of the Canadian SF Association*. It had been recently reprinted by Mike Horvat in an 8 ½ by 11 folded-

²⁸ In the original manuscript, I ranted on this point for about three times the length, and likely didn't make my point half as well.

²⁹ Pretty much an entirely new ending, though written as though it was still 1985. Today it's more like 75 years.

³⁰ As published the piece was substantially shorter than the original letter of comment it was based on. I almost certainly did most of the editing myself, but a portion of it may have been done by Garth Spencer.

over brochure. I have no criticism of the review, which was factual as far as it went. I thought I could shed a little light on the subject of the CSFA, though.

The original publication was in the January issue of a little known fanzine called *Fan To See*, probably in the year 1953. The editor was Larry Touzinsky, a St. Louis fan. The article was reprinted in 8 1/2 by 5 1/2 later in the same year, I think. The reprint has neither credit for publication nor a date anywhere in it. The last page, however, does include the line “the dawning of 1953 sees the state of the CSFA as follows.” The author of the text was Jack Bowie-Reed, a Montreal-area fan who seems to have been last heard from in the late 1960s or early 70s.

Mike Horvat seems to have been inspired to re-reprint the CSFA history with an inadequate explanation. I’m curious to know if his booklet reproduces the *Fan To See* text or the later reprints. There were no significant changes in the text that I could see from the original to Horvat’s edition. If from the reprint, I’d like to know the real publisher was. Could it have been Jack Bowie-Reed, the author? Or was it – as I think more likely – Chester Cuthbert?³¹

I suspect Chester. Throughout the CSFA’s history, Chester Cuthbert has been just about all that has given it substance. He, above all, would have the greatest need to keep the modest brochure in print.

The only other CSFA materials I’ve seen are a fan directory (likely the Fall of 1952) and a second issue of *The CSFA Newsletter*. However, I was able to talk directly with older Canadian fans about the organization, and they tell a rather different story from the official “history.”

For starters, while nothing important has been left out of or altered by Bowie-Reed’s account, it is misleading. The Toronto *Derelicts*, for instance, were never a formal club. It was five or six guys with a mimeographed fanzine. Les Crutch would sometimes drive down from Parry Sound for a get-together and shoot the breeze with Beak Taylor, Fred Hurter and a couple of others. As Jack put it, though, “the first glimmerings of light broke through in 1943 with the trusty work of three of Canada’s senators of fandom.” Sounds a lot more important than it was, doesn’t it? He continues in this vein, “It was in this year that the Canadian Amateur Fantasy Press was formed with three member fanzines. These were *Light*, published in Parry Sound by Les Crutch; *Censored*, published in Kapuskasing by Fred Hurter; and *Canadian Fandom*, published in Toronto by Beak Taylor.” While not inaccurate, the formation of the CAFPP sounds more impressive than it really was.

The truth is, CAFPP never amounted to more than a logo on the covers or in the colophons of the three fanzines, all of which had been publishing for some time already.³² There was no formal organization, no standardization, no qualifications other than being published in Canada. Though I have come across references to printing a small press edition of something or other, as far as I can tell the project was never completed. Curiously, years

³¹ One line of reasoning about Chester’s involvement has been omitted, as in the published form I could no longer make sense of it. Rather than try to sort it out, I deleted a couple of lines of text instead.

³² Imagine if we were to make up a “Group Fanzines Canada” today, and stick a logo with a beaver and mimeo in the colophons of *BCSFazine*, *Opuntia* and *Novoid*... you get the idea.

after the CAFP faded out of the picture, Gerald Steward re-established the CAFP logo in his personalzine, *Gasp*. But when he took *Canadian Fandom* over from Beak Taylor, he neglected to do so in *CanFan*.

Further reason to place little confidence in Bowie-Reed's CSFA history, Fred Hurter doesn't seem to have ever lived in Kapuskasing, and all copies of Censored I have seen originated either from Aurora, Ontario (an hour's drive north of Toronto), or from Montreal. Clearly, CSFA was more nearly a figment of Jack Bowie-Reed's imagination than a real organization, and the CAFP mostly wishful thinking. It is rather like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn going off to be pirates – adopting bloodthirsty names, swearing oaths and dreaming of the bold adventures they would have.

But, in the end, it was just a small number of friends, hanging out and running a mimeo, not the organization of national scope that the Bowie-Reed *History of the Canadian SF Association* makes it out to be.

5. Regional Fandoms: A Balkanized Fanscape

Maple Leaf Rag 3, Jan 1984

(The following was taken from a letter I wrote to Garth Spencer in December 1983. In a later letter, I indicated that I was in no way trying to be exhaustive, impartial or authoritative. "Certainly," I wrote, "I expect my regional breakdown can be attacked by anyone with first-hand knowledge of any of these places. The map I drew should stand up, but I acknowledge the vulnerability of the notes." Garth wanted to subtitle this piece "Omnia Canada Est in Tres Partes Divisa," but he said that didn't think all, or even many, of the readers would get the joke. Since it derives from a casual loc, the column this time has been significantly revised from the original published form.)

Regional fandoms exist. They exist because fandom revolves around conventions, and there are hundreds of cons. No one has the time, money or stamina to go to any significant number of them. A fan naturally tends to go to those that are relatively close and only to as many as he can afford. Those are the cons he meets and gets to know people at, where his friends get together, and about which he will be most interested in hearing about. The events that happen there, and the fan politics involved will affect him and his circle more than anything else is likely to.

There are, of course, cons that overcome regional loyalties. The *Worldcon* is the biggest exception for most of us, but the *World Fantasy Con* is another obvious example. *Westercon*, an event bid for every year by different cities, is another.³³ The *Convention* has not really achieved the same status as a supra-regional convention, though its aims are the same. It has been, so far, just a name attached to whatever regional convention will accept it that year. When Canadian fans from all over the country attend the *Convention* in large numbers, the *Convention* may become more than an idea.

³³ Corflu and Ditto were founded somewhat later than this column was published, and also unify fandom by moving the cite from city to city. However, the two conventions also *divide* fandom into fanzine fans and *not*-fanzine fans.

Special interest groups usually operate outside of regional boundaries. Fanzine fandom is a worldwide activity, for instance. It makes little sense for it exist within boundaries, since writing and publishing don't require face-to-face contact, and postage is comparatively cheap.³⁴ I notice that fanzine fandom shows a degree of regional consciousness, though. In the Midwest, particularly, you see fans who publish primarily for friends who share the same convention circuit, whose fanzines are sometimes not available for trade or the "usual." The zines are usually personalzines and may contain matter not normally discussed with relative strangers – or maybe just a lot of who-said-what-at-which-con trivia. They are usually not well known, but may have a small outside mailing list and a corresponding reputation. Other zines are more like any genzine and have large mailing lists, but nevertheless maintain a strong regional flavour. Much of their material is by a familiar cast of contributors and deals with events occurring only in the South, or West or Northwest, but are read everywhere in the US, Canada, Australia and Britain.

As well as regions, there are other ways that fanzine fandom can be Balkanized. By country, for example. British fanzines are available to anyone who sends a zine in trade, or locs regularly. But British zines are a distinct entity, nonetheless. The names and places are almost always all British, and, if you don't want to read about pubs and unfamiliar personalities, you might as well forget about reading a Britzine. Fandom can also be Balkanized by groupthink... a mental outlook and habit of self-admiration that can be simultaneously elitist and defensive, and places a high value on solidarity. A prime example of groupthink would be the Falls Church cabal, which in one guise or another has terrorized much of fanzine fandom for a full decade.³⁵

Generally speaking, though, every city is a fan center and therefore a world unto itself.

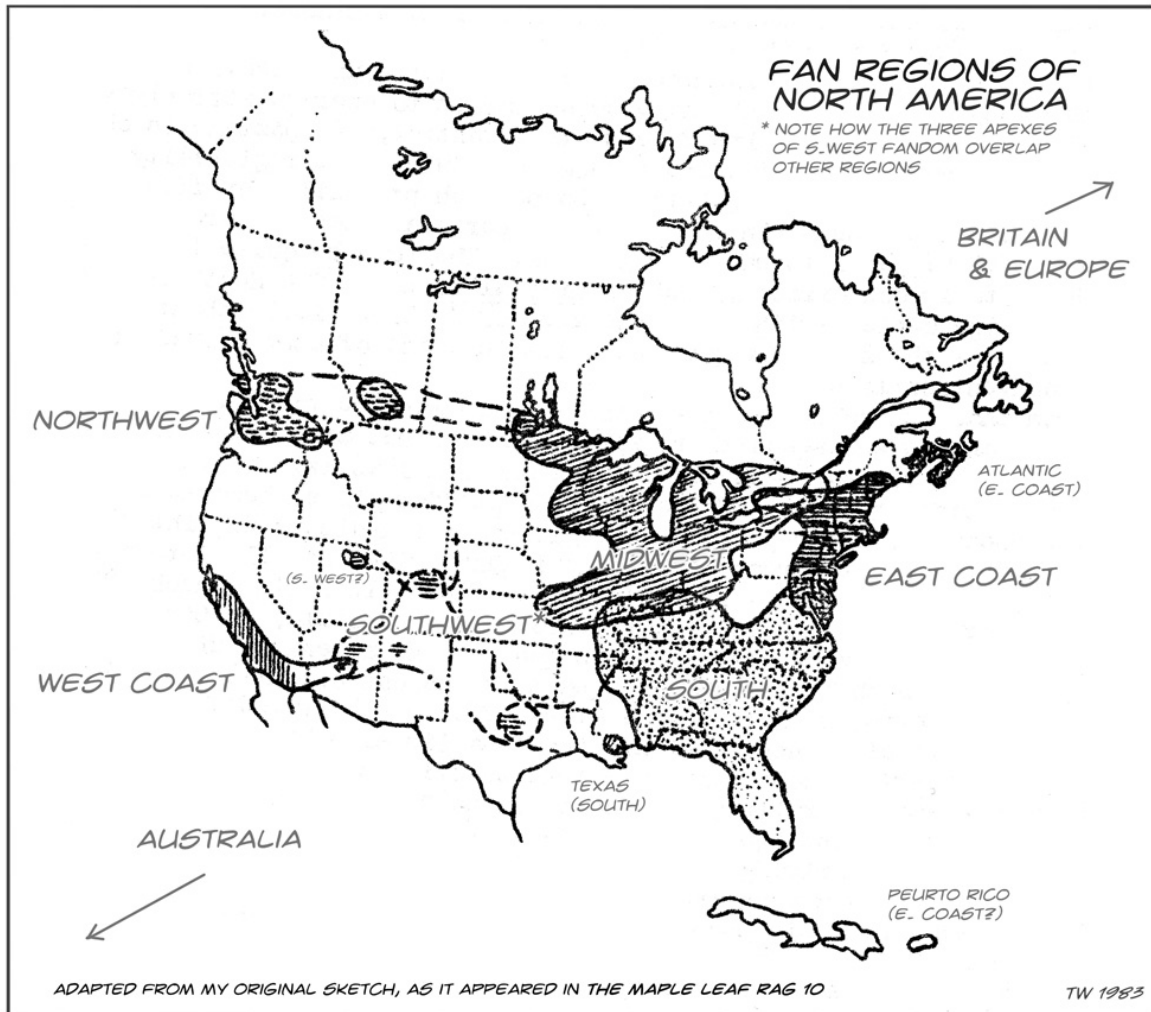
The next step up in the hierarchy is the con circuit. This is usually includes a small number of cities (and their fan groups) that fall within an area three or four hundred miles across. The area is not necessarily circular – it's commonly modified by physical features and lines of transportation. American East Coast fandom, for instance, is more or less the same as the Boston-Washington corridor, a strip several hundred miles long but in places only a hundred miles wide. Local habits among the fans also influence the size and shape of a con circuit. Most East Coast fans don't own cars and follow Amtrak up and down the east coast, but are reluctant to cross over the Appalachians owing to indirect rail connections. Those who can afford the fares, fly, but air travel erases distance so that flyers are as likely to cross the entire country as make a short hop over to the neighboring con circuit. Fans in the Southwest, though, usually own cars and are used to driving nearly a thousand miles, practically without preparation. Unlikely as it might seem, Denver, Las Vegas and Phoenix are all in the same con circuit. In Britain there may be fewer cars, but there is a well-developed network of rail travel, and the entire country (admittedly not huge to begin with) is for all practical purposes one single con circuit.

A con circuit is nearly synonymous with a region, but not quite. For one thing, con circuits often cover the same ground with different circles of fans traveling in each other's

³⁴ We didn't realize how good we had it at the time. Today, postage is ruinously expensive and increasingly fans are abandoning paper for digital formats.

³⁵ More recently, I could cite the Plokta in-group and Arnie Katz's Vegans. Neither is as aggressive as the Falls Church group-mind was, by any means, but both are similarly self-absorbed.

tracks. Con circuits can also overlap, forming links in a chain. A region, however, may cut through a con circuit, as happens in Southern Ontario. Toronto belongs either to the East Coast or to the Midwest, depending on which fan group in involved. In fact, for a time, Toronto had close ties to the Southwest! Finally, even regions overlap and are indistinct around the edges. The map below shows the existing regions as I see them.



As you can see, the regions are anything but simple, and one or two of them are almost better described as a collection of small regions. The Southwest is really only a group of widely separated fan centers, with little in between. Nevertheless, the Southwest has a character all of its own. Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg fall into Northwest fandom by default. They simply aren't near enough to anywhere else to belong. Winnipeg, however, does also falls within the borders of Midwest fandom. Though isolated by the barrier of the Rocky Mountains, Edmonton and Calgary have their ties mainly with the Vancouver, Seattle and Portland area, binding them to the West Coast. As is lonely Moscow, Idaho.

Quebec fandom, to nobody's surprise, is a "distinct society" of fans, limited in extent but perforce having ties overseas to France. As far as I can say, Ottawa is in the odd position of very nearly being its own region. Although closest to Toronto and Montreal, it doesn't

seem to have close ties to either, and should perhaps be included as part of Midwest fandom for lack of alternatives. There is a small Atlantic region as well, centered on Halifax, that might arguably be an extension of Northeast fandom.

At present, the most active fanzine regions are the Northwest and the overlap between East Coast and Southern fandom. The activity in the Northwest is due mostly to a number of fanzine fans in Seattle, who, ironically, moved there a few years ago from New York. At one point, their number was halved when two Seattle fans moved away. Fanzine activity and their ability to represent a region can be that marginal.

Below the visible surface, however, con circuits remain. They ebb and flow with the seasons, and like the tide there's no end.

6. OSFiC: The Success of Failure?

Maple Leaf Rag 10, Dec 1984

Clubs are largely a state of mind, as was the *Ontario Science Fiction Club* when it was begun by a handful of people in 1966. In those days, SF was just emerging from the gutter, where it had been consigned as juvenile pulp writing. There had been no adult SF on film since *Forbidden Planet* or *Destination Moon*, and people didn't read SF bestsellers on the bus. J.R.R. Tolkien was still a cult author among university students. *Star Trek* had only just premiered on NBC's new fall line-up, and no one had ever bought a *Hobbit* calendar or dreamed of rubber ears. To be a fan, SF readers said to themselves, was a Proud and Lonely Thing. Extraordinary measures were needed to bring any of this solitary breed together.

Today, of course, you could recruit science fiction club members from any computer sciences program, or any line waiting to get in to see *Star Trek VII*. But in 1968, OSFiC had only found 14 members. At the peak of its strength, it never had more than 80, but Giants did walk the Earth in those days. There was George Henderson, who gave space in his store to early club meetings. Captain George's *Memory Lane* was nostalgia capitol of the planet, dealing in film posters, old comics, magazines and curious items in dark corners that, no doubt, had more profound lessons to teach the imprudent than any commonplace mogwai.³⁶ The actual meetings, though, were not held in the store, but in the *Whizzbang Gallery* – a basement next door that George rented as a showroom for comic book art.

There were Mike Glicksohn and Susan Wood. Susan had come to Toronto from Ottawa, and had studied Canajian literature at Carleton University. Mike was a newly-minted math teacher with (then) outrageously long hair, a black leather jacket and a motorcycle. He lost the motorcycle later. Together, they published what was unquestionably the most prestigious fanzine in the country, up until that time. Energumen was nominated for a fan *Hugo* two or three times, then finally won a rocket at *Torcon II*. Susan also won the fan *Hugo* on her own, for her charming and intelligent fan writing, and duly received the

³⁶ In case you've forgotten what a mogwai is – *I had*, completely – it is a sort of Chinese demon that was the feature of the Joe Dante movie, *Gremlins*. The lesson learned was not to be curious about things that are none of your business... or if you must, at least pay attention to what the wizened old Chinese merchant tells you!

title of “Duchess of Canadian Fandom” from Georgina Ellis, the previous holder. Mike and Susan parted company after that, shaping fandom around them in their own different ways.

There was John Douglas – quiet, serious and now an editor of Avon Books’ SF line.³⁷ Derek Carter, the English-born artist who dominated Canadian fanzines with his humorous illustrations was another. John Millard, had cranked the Gestetner to produce *Canadian Fandom* and had been chairman of *both* Toronto Worldcons, in 1948 and 1973. Peter Gill was the club’s first fanzine editor and first victim of the *Gill Syndrome*. (The symptoms are longer intervals between larger and larger issues until termination.) Charlie McKee joined us from the U.S., and opened Canada’s first SF bookstore, *Bakka*. Phyllis Gotlieb was a poet, and the country’s senior writer of science fiction. She was also *OSFiC Magazine’s* poetry editor... one of her lesser known honours. Don Hutchison wrote reviews for both *Capt’n George’s Penny Dreadful* and the clubzine, but could most often be found behind a camera in Africa, or in the Northwest Territories, filming for the *CBC*.

Jiants.

Later generations of *OSFiC* members are perhaps still struggling to assert themselves in niches they haven’t quite defined yet, but are cutting their swathes through contemporary fandom.

Barry Kent MacKay, wildlife illustrator and activist, gives hundreds of drawings to fanzines and enlivens club meetings with outrageous tales about washrooms in Latin America, or the traffic around the Greek Orthodox Church near his home on Easter. Jim Allen was possible the number one expert on Tolkien languages apart from Tolkien himself, and Jim had a better grasp of ancient Babylonian. Steve Muhlberger, with is degree in Medieval history in one hand, and a buckler in the other, had won the crowns of both the Eastern and Middle Kingdoms, and founded the *Society for Creative Anachronism’s* chapter in Toronto.³⁸ Victoria Wayne produced the most prestigious Canadian fanzine of *our* time. Patrick Neilsen Hayden (then merely Patrick Hayden) came to Toronto from Phoenix, and with Phil Paine flooded fandom with an apparently limitless number of short, cheaply produced “snappy little fan mags³⁹” long before it was made fashionable by the Falls Church Mob.

Later still came Bob Hadji, probably the most erudite person on supernatural fiction in Canada – even if he did tend to pronounce that *er-ee-uh-dite* – and editor of *Borderlands*, the country’s only dark fantasy semi-pro magazine. Elizabeth Pearse was an indispensable impresario of artshows to many Midwest conventions and even a few Worldcons. Mike Wallis founded *TAPA*, the Toronto based apa, and with “hope eternal” spearheaded several local conventions. One of the producers of *Miriad*, a local media semi-pro, has gone on to be the publisher of *Vortex* comics, and the flagship title, Dean Motter’s *Mr. X*. But, we’re getting ahead of our story...

³⁷ He and Avon are long sundered, but John is still a professional editor, and is married to *another* professional editor.

³⁸ There was later a second chapter, that didn’t pursue medievalism very rigorously and likely mutated into a chapter of the Dorsai Irregulars, or something like that. Neither group Toronto exists today.

³⁹ Ted White and Dan Steffan, leaders of the Falls Church Mob, popularized the expression.

OSFiC has always been primarily a publishing club. Its first fledgling efforts were not much to look at, but before *OSFiC Magazine* reached its final 25th issue it had changed from a one-sheet monthly to a 50-page annual, with covers by Vaughn Bode, Derek Carter and Jack Gaughan. Another monthly newsletter had to be started to replace it as a meeting notice. *OSFiComm*, as it was originally called, passed through many sets of hands, initiating several people into the holy mysteries of pubbing one's ish. Alongside regular *OSFiC* publications were privately edited fanzines like Susan Wood's ecologically –oriented *Aspidistra*, published on *green* paper, and Mike Glicksohn's *Energumen*. Captain George continued to publish his digest sized nostalgia titles such as *The Penny Dreadful*, *The Yellow Journal* and *Capt'n George's Whizzbang* well into the 1970s.

OSFiC underwent a number of changes after Torcon II, primarily due to older members burning out and younger members pressing to take their places. The newsletter passed into my hands, and *Synapse* (as I re-named it) was the first fanzine appearance for many members who later published zines of their own.

Inspired by *Syn*'s example, Victoria Vayne produced seven issues of the lavish genzine, *Simulacrum*. Early issues, like the clubzine, depended upon collaboration of the coterie of Toronto fans who later began calling themselves *The New Derelicts*. Janet Small (now Wilson) followed suit with two issues of *Distaff* – a female oriented zine, published with *OSFiC* funding. Jennifer Bankier published two absolutely humongous issues of *Orca*, also with a feminist flavour. (One, at 103 pages, is still the longest SF fanzine published in Canada, to my knowledge.) Patrick Nielsen Hayden's zine titles number in the dozens, though the total number of pages he published while living in Toronto wasn't actually much higher. *Thangorodrim*, was among the more substantial of his publications, and the closest he came to publishing a genzine at the time.⁴⁰ Like early *Sims*, they consisted of mainly *Derelict* material. Phil Paine's *Calcium Light Nights*, Bob Webber's *Pantekhnikon*, Bill Brummer's⁴¹ *Strange Dystopias* and my own *Delta Psi* – an overblown four-part one-shot held together with a ring, of all things – completes the picture.

All good things must end, but this particular phase of *OSFiC* came to an end rather explosively, as a result of politics during the course of *FanFair III*. But it wasn't yet the end of the club. It simply changed hands again. The next avatar of the newsletter, Mike Harper's *Nit Wit*, simply carried on as before, with a few of the rough edges knocked off. In the west end of town, another club that had more-or-less spun off of *OSFiC* had begun a similar monthly newszine. There were cross-connections, but once fan politics had reared its ugly head it never entirely went away. There were not always friendly feelings between the clubs and the breakaway *New Derelicts*. After Mike grew tired of the monthly effort of publishing, the newszine passed to Jo-Anne McBride. The effort proved a bit much for her, and after only two issues of *The London Sundae Thymes*, the newszine was reduced to a newsletter once again, more than once thrown together at the last moment by a substitute editor.

This is the point where *OSFiC* truly began to falter. Though there were periodic attempts to infuse fresh blood and re-energize the club, none had lasting effect. Issue represented

⁴⁰ It wasn't until he moved from Toronto to Ann Arbor, Phoenix, San Francisco and finally Seattle – where he finally settled down with Teresa Nielsen Hayden – that the two of them produced a number of excellent and very substantial genzines under the titles *Telos* and *Izzard*.

⁴¹ These days Bill Brummer prefers to be called Steven Black, and lives in San Francisco.

my second stint at running the club monthly. Originally I was assisting the editor. Unfortunately, he ran out after only a few months, leaving me to carry on in his stead, mostly on hot air I might add. Various incarnations followed me, like barrack's emperors in 3rd century Rome, each new editor changing the title to suit him or herself. The clubzine rallied somewhat when Rob Sawyer re-invented it as *Gateway*, but when he and Carolyn dropped out, the new *Luna and Beyond* was little better than a mess. By this time, the job of editing the monthly was plainly a chore rather than a pleasure than members sought at election time. *OSFiC* had long ago ceased to take pride in its publications, and its newzine had continued out of a sense of duty.

The seat of publishing in Toronto had shifted to private hands as early as *Nit Wit*, in fact. This remains the case. *Torus*, *DNQ*, *Carefully Sedated* and *Novoid* may have been published by members, but were not sponsored by or represent *OSFiC* in any way.

The club's publishing history has parallels with its history of running conventions. In 1967, a get-together was arranged in Kingston, Ontario for *OSFiC*, its tiny Ottawa branch, and members of the Kingston university club. This was a mere warm-up for the first real convention in Toronto since 1948. The first FanFair was held in 1967, in tents in Markham Street, outside Captain George's store. One report mentions that the art show nearly blew away... The guest was Roger Zelazny, who contributed a terrible little story to *OSFiC Magazine*.

FanFair II was an altogether more formal affair, held in the King Edward Hotel in 1970. It attracted over 400 people, which was respectable by the standards of the time. The guests were Anne McCaffrey and Isaac Asimov, who sang a duet. In spite of this attack on good taste, the con was immensely successful, giving *OSFiC* the good reputation it would need if it were to bid for the *Worldcon*.

The first Worldcon in 1948 had Robert Bloch as Guest of Honour. It seemed natural to the organizers of the second to have Bob Bloch back again as *GoH* for the second, in 1973.⁴² Bill Rotsler was Fan *GoH*. One of the Hugos was presented to one of *OSFiC*'s own for what some have said was the last "fannish" zine to win the award, Mike Glicksohn's and Susan Wood's *Energumen*.⁴³ With a mere 2,900 bodies present, *Torcon* was called by an older generation "the last fannish *Worldcon*," as well. In fact, it was a relaxed, unpretentious convention with little of the berserk commerciality and multiple personalities of recent *Worldcons*. The *World Science Fiction Convention*, even a good one, has a reputation for burning out the host city, and *Torcon* was no different. The first generation of members fell away from *OSFiC* and the old zines died. While Toronto would uphold a tradition as a hotbed for fan publication, its rep for running fine conventions would turn out to be another matter.

The first sign of trouble was the committee in-fighting over FanFair III. The convention was admittedly flawed,⁴⁴ and although it more or less worked out okay, there were 600

⁴² Frankly, I never agreed with this decision. Everybody liked Robert Bloch, but that didn't seem a good enough reason to honour him twice! The only other author I can think of who was twice the *GoH* of a Worldcon was Robert Heinlein, and Robert Bloch was no Robert Heinlein! But I wasn't on the *Torcon II* committee and had no say.

⁴³ This truism was finally laid to rest in 1984, when Mike Glycer's *File 770* won. Of course, it probably helped that a Semi-Pro category had been created, shoving *Locus* aside so that actual fanzines could compete again.

⁴⁴ And I ought to know, since I was chairman.

people present who saw the cracks. The club afterward divided over the usual pointless issues, and that led to a second turnover in the club executive.⁴⁵ The *New Derelicts* went off in their own direction, not entirely out of spite, and left *OSFiC* to fend for itself. The club did well, considering the sudden drop in its corporate assets. After a couple of years, the new executive felt it was able to mount a convention again, and launched Summercon. Unfortunately, attendance was nothing like *FanFair*'s 600, and although it ran fairly well, the con did little to repair the city's reputation. Another attempt was made the following year, but was cancelled a month before the door, due to lack of pre-sold memberships. The rule of thumb in those days was that you should have about a third of your memberships sold when the door opens – I think we had around 30 pre-reg.⁴⁶

OSFiC tried twice more. *Ozymandias I & II* were quite small affairs, run by members with no previous experience. While successful in their own terms, attendance was low. The number of members had dropped step by step to only a couple of hundred. Neither con was what you would expect from the powerhouse *OSFiC* once was. Moreover, friction over the usual fan politics had continued from con to con, even when some personnel were dropped and others added. Nothing seemed to help. For *OSFiC*, the two *Ozzies* were the final straw, and thereafter the running of conventions passed to private groups, just as fanzine publication had.

Club meetings, once they were too large for Capt. George's basement, travelled far and wide. Frequently used spots include the offices of the *Canadian Welder's Society*, the *Palmerston Library* (next to the old location of the *Spaced-Out Library*), *St. Barnabas Anglican Church* and *Hart House* on the *University of Toronto* campus. About the first years of *OSFiC* meetings I can say very little. I wasn't there and existing newsletters don't tell much of the story. What can be deduced is that they were small and informal, but the minutes reveal they were also programmed. As the club moved toward *Torcon II*, the meetings tended to exist more on paper than in the observance, as the club's officers were increasingly busy with Worldcon affairs.

About a year after *Torcon*, a belated election brought in new executive officers. Once they took charge, meetings revived and the newsletter was revamped. The club also began to expand. Nevertheless, meetings grew less structured with time, rather than more. Informal talk among the members increased at the expense of talking heads at the front of the room. Monthly meetings were, in fact, not enough – the regulars began to meet one other Saturday of the month in get-togethers called *Chips 'n' Coffee*. This tended to be the pattern whenever the club was large enough to bring together a sufficient number of the livelier sort of windbags.

A few months after the *FanFair III* walkout by the *New Derelicts*, the club dwindled down again to a handful of attendees, and came close to being dissolved. It was only a temporary slump, however. The club had a series of intertesting guests in the following

⁴⁵ Should I ever tell the whole, unvarnished truth about this spat, I would make a number of enemies. I have to outlive them all first.

⁴⁶ I told them not to call it Prunecon. But a certain somebody thought it was silly, in a Monty Python sort of way, and won the others over. Years later, memory of Prunecon had devolved into a common belief that it had only been a hoax. I suspect people thought it was a hoax from the start, and that's why we had such weak numbers of pre-reg.

year, including John Brunner and Guy Gabriel Kay.⁴⁷ Emergency action by Jim Allan and myself merged a *Star Trek* group into *OSFiC*, introducing fresh blood and extending the club's life by another year or two. Meetings moved from St. Barnabas church to the basements of members who volunteered. The program printed in the newsletter was as often as not ignored, as members talked over vain attempts to bring order. Nobody seemed very pleased, one way or the other, and attendance began to fall again. The newsletters lacked contributions and the two *Ozymandias* conventions did little to revive interest. Eventually, *OSFiC* was back to square one, and there was another motion to dissolve the club.

Ironically, so many older members turned out for that month's meeting, to watch the kill, that the motion was withdrawn before such "a show of interest." Within a few months, a number of members who had quietly joined the club in the interim began to show interest in running things. One last cycle of renewal remained for *OSFiC*.

For a while Robert Sawyer⁴⁸ and his future wife Carolyn almost single-handedly ran the club through his office as secretary. Carolyn was program moderator. The club grew again, but its character changed considerably. The meetings grew rigid, with program topics clearly set out for discussion. There wasn't as much of the old parsiflage. Rob, in fact, did most of the talking. The changes were controversial. Older heads didn't take to Rob's style, but it worked. Sawyer, however, didn't achieve whatever goals he had for *OSFiC* and left the club after his year was up. By this time, it was at least possible to find people to replace him and Carolyn. The energy of his term in office carried over another year. The club had changed permanently, though. The members were in the habit of passive acceptance of whatever was done for them, and lacked initiative of their own. The club became burdened by what some of us called "deadwood," accumulated over several successive administrations and any number of drives for members, *any* members...

The next-to-last executive tried to reverse the creeping paralysis by encouraging debate again. They introduced subjects the members could sink their teeth into, taking different sides. But, the effort was met with rampant apathy from the "deadwood," who let the moderator do most of the talking as it had let Sawyer do most of the talking.

The very last executive simply undertook to keep the machinery of the club going, regardless of how or why, and had no visions to chase. Meetings varied wildly, alternating between a satisfactory turnout and stimulating conversation, to disappointments of four or five people who had nothing to say. There was no telling, so you came without expectations or didn't come at all. The trend, however, was conclusively toward the latter.

In the end, *OSFiC* consisted of little more than the social misfits who had nowhere else to go, and a small number of burned-out officers who stolidly carried on from a sense of duty. Newcomers, who saw one meeting, invariably failed to return. There appeared to be no hope this could go on much longer. Nor did it.

⁴⁷ Although, at this time he was not a fantasy writer, only one of the assistants who were sorting out the J.R.R. Tolkien estate.

⁴⁸ Yes, that Robert J. Sawyer.

Where *OSFiC* had finally failed was that its final preserve – a place for fans to gather – had, like publishing and running cons, passed out of its hands. People were meeting on their own, with no club to tell them when or where. Who needed organization and dues anymore? Not the New Derelicts. Not the *Draconis* series of conventions, nor *Ad Astra* that followed them. Not the monthly *Bascon* or the still continuing *Chips ‘n’ Coffees*.

OSFiC's final project throws interesting light on this point. Before we simply threw up our hands and began to think of putting the club out of its misery, the active members planned an *OSFiC* apa. It was thought that, by involving the members in some common, and stimulating, purpose, the club might be brought to life again. There were only five mailings of *Griffonage* in all – Bee Stuckless was OE, but only lasted through the first mailing. Even then, she admitted in her contrib that the apa was 10 months in the borning. I thought it only 6, but perhaps Bea was right. From the second to last mailings I took up as emergency OE. It was not a bad little apa, as far as it went, but filling the mailings were only three or four people. I was running anything I could lay my hands on, including sheets picked up from the Science Center. I packed it in, finally, because the *only* contribution I had was from Janet Wilson.

In retrospect, I can see why *Griffonage* was a failure. While it would have been ideal if it had energized the club, the fact was that if the fans of Toronto wanted an apa, they were capable of running one without *OSFiC*. In fact, there were several – *TAPA*, *Extraterritoriality* and *A Woman's Apa*, to name three.

The final collapse of *OSFiC* came about when Bob Hadji⁴⁹ and I pointed out that, at the end of the current terms of office, there would be no candidates who fit the two minimum requirements of office. 1) Basic competence, and 2) a willingness to run. There were one or two possibilities who met one requirement or the other, but not both. More and more, even the deadwood were finding better things to do with the last Sunday of the month, so that even those who marginally met the first requirement, failed the second. And heaven forbid that those who met requirement 2), but not the *first*, be allowed to run the club. *OSFiC* had a history and reputation we still thought worth preserving.

The means by which the club could be improved or at least saved had been debated endlessly. But the noble goal of preserving *OSFiC* ran afoul of the simple fact that no one with ability had an appetite for the work involved. The club could be left hanging in limbo – without officers, members or meetings – but why not actually give it the coup de grace? At least we would be sure it would never be taken over by the Scientologists or by exploitative parties who only wanted to shelter behind the club's non-profit status.

Hadji, Do-Ming Lum and myself announced our candidacy in order to implement the plan. We would be the last *OSFiC* executive if elected. There was some bitching when we announced this, and some regrets from old hands, but – significantly – no one ran for office against us, to block our proposal. At the September meeting there were no other candidates, so we were elected by acclamation. Hadji was the last program moderator. Do-Ming the last treasurer. And I was the last of the long line of secretaries and the last newsletter editor *OSFiC* would ever have. Our first and ultimate act was to declare

⁴⁹ Known in these post-9/11 days as Bob Knowlton.

December 1984 as the date on which *OSFiC* disbanded, the 18th anniversary of its founding in 1966. The remaining treasury was refunded to all paid-up members.

The reasons behind *OSFiC*'s ultimate failure are pretty clear when you come right down to it. For all that the club originally brought fans together so that they might pursue their interests, fans more and more learned to carry on those interests outside of *OSFiC*. Eventually, there was no point to having a club at all. It wasn't even bringing in new blood – conventions did a fair better job of advertising fandom than a few flyers at the *SOL* or at *Bakka* ever could. Matters might have gone differently. They obviously did in other cities, where clubs survive decade after decade, actually outliving their members.

What event or events set Toronto fandom spinning off in a different track? At first look, it might seem, the death of *OSFiC* can be traced back to the divisive fighting in the club right after *FanFair III*. The immediate result was the independence of the fanzine coterie from club oversight, and contributed to the establishment of a second club in the west-end. Rival groups, pursuing goals at odds with each other, led to rival conventions as well. But pointing to the obvious is a little like saying that the Crusades were caused by European knights invading the Holy Land. The mistake is confusing effects for causes. The events that divided Toronto fandom weren't so much the causes of its fragmentation as simply the first signs of strain due to forces already at work.

It's my belief that Toronto fandom merely responded to the growing pains that any fandom experiences. Clubs, if I haven't already said it, are a state of mind. That state of mind altered radically after *OSFiC*'s birth in 1966, because science fiction itself was rapidly evolving.

Not long ago, Robert A. Heinlein was paid \$500,000 for *The Number of the Beast*. A new SF film is now conceived from the start as a multi-million dollar, multi-media marketing campaign for not only the theater release, but also for home video, the novelization, comic book adaptations, action figures, toys, Halloween costumes, bubble-gum cards, breakfast cereals, model kits, stickers and lunch buckets. (Did I miss anything? A single omission could mean losing millions!) At once time *Dungeons & Dragons* was played with a xeroxed manual, pads of ruled paper you bought from *Grand & Toy* and several pairs of dice. Today, *D&D* sets are manufactured by games companies along with boards and lead figures. Marion Zimmer Bradley, who once declared in some forgotten fanzine that women could not write science fiction, now makes the best-seller list with her *Dragonworld* series. Video arcades echo to the sounds of wall-to-wall games involving aliens, force fields, warp drives, worm-holes, time-travel and phasers. Half the shows on television seem to be about one SF premise or another – talking muscle cars or extraterrestrials who arrived on Earth in an egg, just as two examples. President Reagan spoke of shielding America from attack with “*Star Wars*” weapons. While once it was a Proud and Lonely thing to be a Fan, clearly it's hard these days to avoid people who are super-saturated with SF ideas.

It can hardly be expected that the tens of thousands of people now interested in SF, in one form or another, can have terribly much in common besides SF. Yet a club is a tool that brings people together... Once *OSFiC* was large enough, it was inevitable that those differences would make themselves felt, and at some point the bonds of SF just weren't enough to hold the critical mass together. The club simply fissioned. Each group went its

own way and pursued its own goals without burdening anyone else with them. Each group succeeded or failed on its own terms, not on anyone else's.

The “failure” of *OSFiC* then, was to step out of the way and successfully let fans do their own thing. Was this really “failure?”

As went *OSFiC*, so is the natural course of all fan groups, I think... and probably of fandom as a whole. Could it be that the longevity of some groups is more a sign of stagnation? I'll just let you think about that a while.

I come not to bury *OSFiC*; I come to praise it. For all that it had become unnecessary, at one time it was the door to fandom in Toronto. It brought people together at a time when it was difficult for fans to find one another and to pool their abilities toward a common goal. As an isolated reader of SF in 1971 – who answered a small ad in the back of a used copy of *Fantastic Magazine* – I know this is so. I joined *OSFiC* as quickly as I could scrape together the \$3 membership. I met a curious assortment of people who taught me to crank a mimeograph and type stencils, exposed me to Etruscan and Sindarin Elvish, liked to stay up all night and explore obscure corners of Toronto's ravines, relished blintzes, curries and stir fry, and thought we were on to something special in science fiction that other, unblest people weren't aware of. I attended my first convention because *OSFiC* ran it, and published my first actual fanzine as an *OSFiC* newsletter. Without *OSFiC* I would not have many of the friends I have, nor would I be counting Hugo pins today. I outgrew *OSFiC* in time, of course, but without it I would unquestionably be much the poorer.

7. The Day Torcon 3 Began, Spoofing Fan Politics Maple Leaf Rag 13, Mar 1985

*(Remember, this was supposed to be 1983, twenty years before the **real** Torcon 3 in 2003!)*

...a letter in the *OSFiC* newsletter was the start of it. It was written by someone who should have known better, who was an expatriate of the city, and had survived the fandom there. But however injudiciously the gauntlet had been thrown down, the challenge couldn't be ignored if Toronto fans were to face themselves in the mirror. (A chilling prospect at the best of times.) Reluctantly, fans from all walks of life assembled for the first time in years, to discuss a worldcon bid.

They filed, one by one, into a silent room for the 2 O'clock meeting. At quarter to three, the room was still silent, and thick with mutual suspicion. Then someone realized that they were all waiting for others to show up. Bob Hadji checked with Do-Ming Lum, who was keeping minutes, and confirmed that in fact they were already all there. No-one had realized it though, since they didn't recognize one another. Hadji thought he should make introductions. He hardly opened his mouth before his precedence was contested by everyone on

the floor. The two dozen people in the room formed and re-formed into caucuses, to raise one of their own to speak first. Somehow Hadji ending up speaking first anyway. Most likely because no agreement could be reached among the contending parties, and it was getting to be three-thirty. He made the introductions:

He and Do-Ming were there to represent OSFiC. He then pointed out Mike Wallis and Howard Scrimgeour, the middle-of-the-road convention crowd. Kevin Davies came next, an independent. Then Taral Wayne, a radical fanzine fan. Liz Pearse followed, from media and art shows. Next came John Robert Colombo, representing academic interests. Then John Millard, the old time fan and collector. Although more familiar than most with the disparate faces of Toronto fandom, Hadji ran through those he knew quickly, and thereafter asked people to introduce themselves. A couple stood up and declared themselves from costuming. A tall-in-the-saddle type said he was a Dorsai, and demanded strict compliance with any military fiat he might find it necessary to impose. A pair of high-schoolers identified themselves as fans of the *best* sci-fi on television. Immediately two others shot up, one declaring *she* was the Star Trek representative, and another that *he* was the Dr. Who fan there. (And who were the imposters, they both wanted to know?). It developed that the show originally referred to as “the best sci-fi on television” was not even on the air, let alone in international syndication. Much less was it the subject of even a single \$40,000,000 movie. The two high-schoolers were hooted out of the meeting. Rapidly thereafter, people identified themselves as from comics, games, video, Japanimation, and a Heisenbergian nightmare of other splinter groups.

The first order of business was to establish a committee, and at once there were difficulties. It was agreed that twenty-four chairmen was an impractical number, but no-one volunteered to withdraw their claim. The assembly decided to accept itself as twenty-four candidates for the chair, and table the matter of an election until another time. Someone brought up the division of labour in the committee. This resolved itself suspiciously easily, as people staked out their individual hegemonies. There were one or two exceptions, such as eleven people demanding exclusive liaison with the guests, and two competing factions for internal security. Then it was noticed that certain alliances had cornered large areas of responsibility, and demands came to break up the monopolies.

Security passed out of the hands of one faction into the hands of the other. At once there was an objection from another area of the floor, viewing with alarm the loyalty oaths the new security chief had once demanded from past concoms. He promised no loyalty oaths as long as he could administer a polygraph test to every prospective concom member, but to no avail. Security passed into a third set of hands, one of the video representatives. This brought up the issue of monopoly of power again – it was objected that one faction couldn't be allowed to be in charge of film *and* security. Then someone asked for a separate security force for the art show... The decision on security was deferred.

Two people wanted to do publications. Kevin said he could get good deals on printing, and subsidize the costs with lavish ads. Taral claimed he would do the artwork himself, and could get the best contributors. He only draws himself, it was remarked, and also that Kevin was an artist too. This was countered with sarcasm from someone familiar with Kevin's past "deals". Then someone asked what was more important, a better editor, or a better publisher? A motion was made to put the publications in the hands of a third party with more experience than ordinary fans. Objection was made at once that the party would use them as little more than self-promotion. Colombo took exception, and asked what was the matter with that? Publications were tabled until the next meeting.

Elizabeth Pearse commented that she'd like a special guest artist at the con, perhaps her wonderful friends, the Freas's – but she was immediately drowned out by the floor.

"Again? They were special guests at Chicon!" cried someone.

"What about *my* friend, Ken Fletcher?" countered Taral.

"Who?" came a chorus of voices.

"We should get John Benson to run the art show – he won't rig the judging!"

"...we owe it to her to let her make back what she lost... "

...and other less intelligible howls of fury, directed as much to other speakers as to Elizabeth. She backed down, and that issue was left undecided as well.

The bidding committee (still pro tem until its membership could finally be resolved) took up the matter of Guests of Honour. There was no agreement, but a satisfactory number of alternatives were proposed. About thirty-nine of them, ranging from Jerry Pournelle, through Alfred Bester, to J.G. Ballard. A few suggestions, such as Charles Platt, E.C. Tub, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, and L. Ron Hubbard were discarded out of hand. Having been unexpectedly productive in an area potentially fraught with controversy, the pro tem committee happily passed on to the next item on the agenda.

Someone challenged Bob Hadji's proposal that he head a program team, eliciting grips from the floor about "artsy-fartsy" panels, "talking heads," and "commie-intellechewal-queers." Someone demanded that David Warren be in charge of program, contested immediately by a claim for Danny Lozinsky. Since neither candidate had been informed of the "open" meeting, and wasn't present, the matter was referred to such time as it could be put to one or the other.

One after another, difficulties were met and similarly dealt with.

At 9:30 P.M. the committee pro tem had reason to feel proud of the progress it had made. In spite of the many differences that divided it, a unanimous decision had been reached to hold a bidding party! Just as soon, that is, as the committee could agree just when and where it should be held...



8. Canadian APAs: Grim Travelers in Dawn Skies

Torus 5, Apr 1988

I was tempted to abandon the Same As It Ever Was title in favour of one from another song I like. *Grim Travelers in Dawn Skies* is from Bruce Cockburn's popular album, *Humans*. The line refers to cheerless men and women who are too busy for their own good, flying from one meaningless destination to another, and blind to the beauty of the world all around them. All too often, apas are the "grim travelers" flying in the "dawn skies." As well, Cockburn is a Canadian singer/songwriter – extra points for irony.

Remembering how undeveloped many fan's musical tastes are, however, I fell back on the familiar line that has headed all 7 columns so far. (It's from the song *Once in a Lifetime*, in the album *Remain in Light* by *Talking Heads*.)

Though it isn't half as clever or witty, and therefore completely lacking snob appeal, at least the familiar title will spare the editor a flood of letters asking what I meant by that. Therefore, he will be grateful to me and not ask me to write another article for him.

I couldn't anyway. There is only so much history to apas in Canada, and the entire subject can be covered by a handful of facts, a few anecdotes and an off-colour joke or two. Before 1972 there were no apas in Canada, and there were very few Canadians in apas anywhere.

Probably the first Can fan to write a mailing comment was Les Croutch, who published a zine called *Light* through the 1940s and well into the 50s. *Light* began as a carbon-copy list of books and magazines that Croutch had for sale, and was called simply *The Croutch Magazine Mart News*. I think he changed the name and joined the now venerable *Fantasy Amateur Press Association* with the same issue, the 108th. At a later date, he changed the numbering to match his entry into *FAPA*.

Croutch was probably the only Canadian in apas until the early 1950s, when the *Derelicts* of that era – Boyd Raeburn, P. Howard Lyons and Gerald Steward joined *FAPA* and *SAPS*. Art Hayes, in the gold-mining district of Northern Ontario, joined *OMPA* that I know of. Canadian fandom in places other than T.O. was growing just as quickly in those years. Gina Ellis began her fanac in Calgary, Norm Clarke in Ottawa and Norman G. Browne in Edmonton, and later joined *FAPA* as well. Gina and Norm Clarke (later married) remained in *FAPA* until at least 1972 or '73, as was Paul Wyszowski of Ottawa. By the late '60s, though, the energy of the Canadian Fandom of the '50s had dissipated. That would have been the end of this history if a new generation of fans hadn't sprung up from the ashes of the old Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver fandoms. Fandom in Canada in the 1980s is, in fact, still coasting on the initial impetus of a fannish upwelling just over 17 years ago.

The curtain rises on apa history in Canada when a comics and SF fan named Vaughn Fraser proposed *Canadapa* on a historic, but since forgotten, day in late 1972. His objective was the unification of Canadian fandom through an apa of 25 members, 60% of which must be Canadian. In theory, it was mailed monthly and continued through over 50 mailings, until only a couple of years ago. Not smoothly though.

At first there was a fair representation of SF fans in *Canadapa*, including such luminaries of the time as Mike Glicksohn, Susan Wood, Richard Labonté and Rosemary Ulliot. The other half of the contingent published rather crudely by comparison, and their discussions of the *X-Men*, Jim Steranko and various secret-identity crises among costumed superheroes, did little to please the SF clique. Distaste over the ribaldry of certain of the contributions led to several prominent members dropping out, after which the comics members were left pretty much to themselves. After little more than a year or two, Fraser moved to Vancouver and *Canadapa* ceased to be the albumen of Canadian fandom he hoped it would be.

Canadapa continued undisturbed as a comics apa, however, until 1976 or so, when it was obvious that its old membership was losing interest, and that newer blood from remoter fringes of fandom had gradually come to the fore. Fraser himself retired as *Official Editor* and the office was filled by one after another *OE* that somehow ended with a minac strike, a feud carried on against *OSFiC* (without the Ontario club knowing anything about it) and a dangerous interruption of mailings.

Then *Canadapa* appeared to stabilize again. The reform *OE* made heroic efforts to recruit new members from fandom, but only by working against the grain of the existing

establishment. The old members of *Canadapa* were, at that time, suspicious of fandom and had only recently been flinging ordure and epithets at it. As a result, after a rather good beginning, the only well-known members of Canadian fandom who joined *Canadapa* in its last years were Mike Hall and Robert Runté.

Meanwhile, most Canadian fans who had been contemporaries of *Canadapa*'s founding had gafiated, and a newer generation of fans went about their business in blissful ignorance of the apa. Not a word was heard about apas in Canada again until 1975, when an apa-hack from Phoenix, Arizona moved to Toronto with his folks, and slid effortlessly into the ranks of the "New" *Derelicts*. Patrick Nielsen Hayden had already formed one apa, *AZAPA*, before leaving Phoenix. Once in Toronto he proposed another, *Ontapa*. After about two weeks of toying with the idea, skepticism reasserted itself in Toronto fandom, and *Ontapa* was hastily interred, lest someone complain that the name stank. The influence of a dedicated apa-hack cannot be underestimated. There was a delayed effect. Once one of the New *Derelicts* – Phil Paine – was inveighed into one of the many apas Patrick belonged to, the rest quickly followed. In short order, all of us were involved in *Apa-50*, *AZAPA*, *SAPS*, *TAPS*, et al. Before long, we couldn't keep track of our trades with each other. I suggested an apa just for Toronto fans that would simply swap apazines from other apas. *Co-Opa* lasted only six mailings before entropy claimed it – and not without a small fight over letting in non-Toronto members – but also because too many secret or private apazines were being withheld.

Susan Wood had been talking in Vancouver about the need for a feminist apa. But she had been too busy to found *Bread and Roses*, as she wanted to call it. Janet (Small) Wilson and Victoria Wayne stepped up to bat instead, but named it for the promotional pre-mailing instead. The feminist apa has been *A Woman's APA*, or *AWApa*, ever since. At first, *AWApa* was open to both men and women, to the chagrin of the more ardent feminists who couldn't talk about sexism with the opposite sex was listening in. A private extension of the apa, *Sub-Set* was hastily arranged. The need for *Sub-Set* vanished once the women of *AWApa* took a vote without the guys and kicked them out of the body politic. Not surprisingly, *Sub-Set* suffered an instant slump. It revived gradually, a very private apa with about 10 members, separate but overlapping with *AWApa*.

Another spin-off from *AWApa* was called simply *Spin-Off*. At first conceived as a frivolous feminist apa by its founder, Karen Pearlston, it has since grown into an ordinary invitational apa with no feminist pretensions. Perhaps some of the original members from *AWApa* remain, but I have no doubt that *Spin-Off's* founder would be surprised at some of the people who were later invited.

Still other spin-offs from *AWApa* emerged. For example, *Mixed Company*, for male and female members. But these have drifted like their parent into the fringes of fandom.

A Woman's Apa and its relatives are technically Canadian, the OE being Janet Wilson for many years. *Sub-Set*, *Mixed Company* and *Spin-Off* were also conceived and first collated

in Toronto. But as geography was never a relevant issue, and the membership was international, an argument can be made that *AWApa* doesn't really count.

Patrick Nielsen Hayden, the corrupting influence that led so many Toronto fans to ruin, was not to be denied the honour of founding a Canadian apa of his own. His first child, the Arizona based *AZAPA*, grew querulous and uncomfortable in reaction to many of the hotheaded statements made by the "New" *Derelicts* he'd introduced to membership. Subsequently, he and the *Derelicts* and a few others founded *Oasis*. An invitational apa, its first mailing (called a "miniature golf course" for some reason) went in the mail in August 1977. Its members were the handpicked cream of many apas and got off to an encouraging start with a thick first mailing. By the 5th mailing, it was being stapled in two parts. But, it too had grown querulous and uncomfortable. (Something about those *Derelicts*!) Bad vibes took their toll of a few members who were clearly out of their element, and were targeted for harassment. A particularly lax minac rule allowed members to "express continued interest" and get away with no contributions, mailing after mailing. Finally, the apa was handed over to a new *OE* (no election). The schedule grew erratic. Mailings of *Oasis* shrunk to mere puddles.

There were only 21 mailings (and one unofficial mailing of *Desert*) in six years of existence, speaking eloquently of the neglect of this sex-weekly apa. Its abuse actually began to look like more of a virtue as time went by, since it was hard to keep up an argument when mailings were months apart. Discord died down, the members mellowed and *Oasis* became a moderately relaxed, easy place to stay in touch with friends in its later years... much the same way that *FAPA* was the graveyard of old fen and tired. *Oasis's* last mailing is dated January 1983.

A comics fan took the next shot at starting a Canadian apa. Jim Shedden had been *OE* of *Canadapa*, but was disappointed in his attempts to housebreak it. Early in 1980, he decided that Canada was a big enough country for one more apa. He circulated a one-shot - *This Sure Ain't DNQ* to get things started. Unfortunately, Shedden got no response. His apa died stillborn, without a real name or a first mailing.

I had been growing impatient with *Oasis*, and decided I'd start an apa of my own. It would also be invitational, but, unlike *Oasis*, it would have a real minac rule. No other written rules, however. My apa would be a benevolent dictatorship. Extraterritoriality was supposed to concentrate the quirky, eccentric fans that I knew into one place, hopefully including several of the members of *Oasis*. All of one mailing was ever produced. Although it *was* unconventional, at least, it wasn't anything to boast about. I grow discouraged easily, and when it sunk in that my invitation list was nothing but wishful thinking, I lost interest. Faced with a choice between finding the usual suspects of apa-hacking, and throwing good effort after bad, or canceling *XT* in disgrace, I chose the good sense of disgrace.

For every season change, change, change... to borrow lines from songs again. In Toronto, Sam Wagar initiated a short-lived anarchist apa that seemed to devolve in short order to a (leftist) politically correct fanzine called *Free Fanzine*.

Meanwhile, with some egging on, in June 1980, Mike Wallis founded TAPA (for a more right-wing sort of political correctness). Originally, TAPA was meant to encourage the large neofan community in Wallis's apartment building to try their hands at fan publishing.⁵⁰ No fanzines of note ever grew out of the experiment, that I know of, but the apa itself was a ponderous success. Monthly mailings quickly reached the point where they had to be stapled into two sections. There was a waitlist almost as long as the membership roster. The growth had been unsteady, however. The rate of turnover had been high, with some internal friction causing many initial members to drop out. With time, proportionally more and more of the members were "military brats," whose families were in the armed forces. This tended to colour the personality of TAPA a recognizable shade of *Canadian Armed Forces* green.

By the end of the second year, TAPA had achieved a sort of steady-state, and mailing followed mailing rather uneventfully for several years. (Except, perhaps, for the tongue-in-cheek institutionalization of *OE*-bashing.) In the summer of 1986, Wallis reluctantly gave TAPA up, and for a while it seemed as if no one meant to take his place as *OE*. A plan to rotate the editorship - having an *IE*, Interim Editor - failed, and the new *OE* found the apa on his hands full-time. A substitute one-shot mailing meant to fill in a three month hiatus never appeared. However, TAPA continues on a monthly schedule, some 85 mailings old as of this writing.

At this point, we cross over the line between history and current events. The pace picks up and so will the narrative.

Ottawa's answer to TAPA was *Apa-Plexy*. Perhaps it was meant to provide an alternative to the military character of the Toronto apa. In the "civilian" hands of founder Farrell McGovern, the first mailing was actually titled *Apa-Plexy 100* or *Apa Whatever #1*. In a fit of common sense, this was instantly shorted to *Apa-Plexy*. Begun in 1985, this hexa-weekly organ should have produced some 25 mailings by now. The fewer than twenty members include an overlap with TAPA and *The Final Frontier*, but Ottawa fans have always been in the majority, as is clearly proved by periodic flare-ups in the apa of *Ottawa Science Fiction Society* politics.

The Final Frontier, no surprise, began its life as a *Star Trek* apa from Grand Prairie, Alberta, in 1980. It took all of three or four mailings to grow out of the initial constraint placed on it, and join the mainstream of fannish apas. The maximum membership is 25. Like most Canadian apas, though, the upper limit is rarely met. In spite of its membership size, many of the more than 40 bi-monthly mailings have been large enough

⁵⁰ Some were fannish types that Mike introduced to fandom, others were fans who moved into the building to be closer together, out of some slan-shackish instinct. Both groups made up the attendance of a monthly party that spanned several apartments, called Baskon after Marge Baskin.

to staple into two parts. *TFF* has had many *OE*s, and has been collated from one end of the country to the other. In that sense, it's probably the closest thing in spirit to a true Canadian apa since Vaughn Fraser created *Canadapa*.

The founder of *The Final Frontier* was Derek McCulloch, but *TFF* isn't the only apa he was responsible for. Others mentioned to me are *Apa-Turnover*, a fiction workshop whose members took turns as *Central Mailer* (now defunct); *Bond-apa*, for fans of *007* (also defunct) and *Galactus*, a comics apa.

At least one other workshop-apa exists in Canada besides McCulloch's. Around a year ago, roughly 1987, Lexi Pakulak in Calgary began an apa for "serious writers" called *Quill*. I've heard nothing more about it.

There is a Maritime apa called *Marapa*, started about three years ago by Randall and Joan McDougall, while living in Fredericton, New Brunswick. I've heard only that it contains a lot of "cruddy fiction." Perhaps *Marapa* is actually a *third* workshop for would-be writers.

I can testify first hand to *Reverie*, a comics apa from St. Albert, Alberta. Its founder was Garry Thomas. He may have been inspired to edit this annual effort by his membership in a funny animal apa from California. I was one of the founding members of that apa and was on Thomas's mailing list. Unfortunately, the second mailing of *Reverie* is already overdue...⁵¹

Starting from a conspicuous lack of apas in the country until quite recently, today there is what might best be called a superfluity of them. If I've given the impression that apas in Canada have been an unimpressive lot, founded on wishful thinking, whose potential was squandered by strike or indolence, and striking mainly for their mediocrity, it is not to laugh. There is a moral buried somewhere under the dark humour and innuendos. It is that, with few exceptions, **all** apas are banal! Few last more than a short while or attract the sort of members who make legends. Nationality makes no difference – Canada has had a share of failures in the same proportion as the U.S. or Great Britain. It has had a few successes too, notably *AWApa* and *TAPA*.

It has been argued that the apa has seen its day, and is currently fading away. Emergent technology has given up entire new horizons to sink below. The computer bulletin board is no doubt where we will go to make foolish chatter and pick fan feuds in the future. I already belong to one run by Ken Rosser from Toronto, called *The Trap Line*, and I doubt very much it will be the last.⁵²

⁵¹ I eventually left *Rorbrazzle*. Mailing 35 was my last. After founder and first *OE*, Marc Schirmeister, turned the apa over to Fred Patten, it ran for over 65 more mailings. Patten suffered a paralyzing stroke a couple of years ago, and since then *Brazzle* has only appeared sporadically, whenever a temporary *OE* can be found. *Reverie*, on the other hand, was never heard from a gain.

⁵² And how! In the original text I made no mention of the Trap Line, but well could have. The bulletin board wasn't the final say in how we use the internet, of course, but in retrospect I marvel at how prescient I appeared to be in 1988.

II. Supplemental Material

The Key to Convention 8

A Sort of Report on KeyCon 5 only 23 years too late

Askance 26, March 2012



The year was 1899... er, 1988. It was the second time a *CUFF* delegate had been sent to the *Convention*, and the first since the one-shot trip Mike Hall made from Edmonton to Toronto for *Torque 1*, eight years earlier. It had not been an honest race, mind you. That would come in later years. I ran unopposed with the encouragement of Fran Skene, who was one of the movers behind *CUFF*'s resurrection. You might say it's all *her* fault.

Why am I writing this 23 years after the event? The fact is, I thought I *had* written a trip report years ago. But, a dedicated search of relevant fanzines has turned up nothing. The problem was that there *were* no relevant fanzines! *New Canadian Fandom* was too early for *CUFF*, and so was *DNQ*. *The Maple Leaf Rag*'s very last issue makes mention that *CUFF* will be re-launched, but there is no other news. I found no trace of the trip report in *Torus* or the few issues of *Neology* I kept. The conclusion I come to is that I never wrote any such report. What a let-down!

But, then, perhaps I had reasons to keep my silence. It may be no accident that I remember rather little of the trip to Winnipeg as the *CUFF* delegate. Browsing through the PR and program book brings back a few dim memories of things it might well have been best to forget. While I continued to search old fanzines, I also began to jot things down.

To begin on a positive note, I have to say that I liked what I saw of Winnipeg. Spotting the Red and Assiniboine Rivers from the air, I never saw them again, unfortunately, but the downtown was still mainly very picturesque architecture from 1900's to 1920's. It was a little down-at-heels, in a comfortable way, and I would like to have seen more. Since then, most of it has likely been torn

down. I would imagine that those old wedding cake buildings and late Victorian decorations have been replaced by modern glass and steel high-rises with as much personality as a supermarket. The photos I've been sent by a friend who moved to Winterpeg haven't been reassuring.

Looking at the old *KeyCon 5* program book again, I find a number of oddities. For one thing, the con seemed to be hosted by every fan group in the city, not just the SF fandom. A few years earlier, I had close ties with the boys of *Decadent Winnipeg Fandom*. Before they drifted out of fandom and out of my ken, they warned me that the newer generation was multi-media and very self-sufficient. They had not networked widely in what we then called mainstream fandom, nor showed much interest in it. The con's program book lists a half dozen organizations who apparently all contributed to the effort – the local SF group, the Trekkies, the SCA, the Whovians, gamers and all. The mixture of interests is shown by *KeyCon 5*'s program schedule. On Saturday, for instance, there is:

- An SCA tourney
- An Elfquest "howl"
- A fanzine panel
- A costuming event
- A panel on story telling
- An autograph session
- A talk on the L5 Society
- A debate on whether Star Trek The Next Generation is worthy to carry on from TOS
- A comparison of fashion accessories from Dr. Who and Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
- A Masquerade
- A filk concert
- The business meeting for the *Convention*.

Other than the cover of the program book and progress report, there is no other mention of the *Convention*. That, in itself, is a little odd, don't you think?

If that humbles us a little, consider this. *CUFF* isn't mentioned at all, except once, obliquely. On Sunday, 2 p.m.:

"CUFF TURKEY AUCTION – We've all read a real turkey. I mean a story that you would pay to have stopped. Fran Skene presents another great fannish tradition in order to raise money for the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. You are encouraged to bring your 'favourite' pieces of science fiction. The audience is encouraged to help in any way (included acting out the passages)."

Although naming *CUFF* in the title, it is basically a Fran Skene program item in which she does what she had been doing at other conventions for some time. This reading must have been identical to any number of other readings, except that the audience paid to have their choice of turkey meat served up by Fran.

The turkey auction was probably the part of *KeyCon* that I remember most vividly. Fran wasn't the only reader. There were only one or two, but after all this time their identities are a mystery. I had assumed that the connection to *CUFF* meant that I was supposed to be on the panel, so I took a place at the front as well. And I sat there doing nothing while the others read from John Norman's *Gor* books. Otherwise, I might as well have been at the Winnipeg zoo looking for *Winnie the*

Pooh's plaque. I think I overheard Fran say later that she didn't know what I was doing there, but it might have been someone else. I felt like a prize chump, though. And that was the highlight of the con for me.

I did sit on two panels. They were predictably panels on fanart and fanzines. I have no complaint about them. In fact, I don't remember one single detail about either. They might have been cancelled for lack of attendance, for all that I recall.

In fact, I don't remember one single bloody thing at all about the entire con. There's a dim ghost of a memory about talking to someone on the concom about my role as *CUFF* delegate, and maybe there was a curtain behind us, but that might be nothing more than a figment of my imagination. Twenty-three years has a way of jumbling up associations in your mind that never made much of an impression in the first place.

For the record, *KeyCon 5* was held over May 20th to 21st, 1988, at the *Holiday Inn Downtown*. The Guest of Honour was Gene Wolfe. They had an Honoured Guest as well, but whether Charles de Lint ranked the GoH, or they were equals, I don't know. Fran Skene was Fan Guest of Honour, and Kevin Davies was Artist Guest. If anyone cares, it cost \$25 for membership at the door. If you got yours early, you would have been set back a mere \$16! The con had a 30 page program book with the usual forgettable crap in it – ads made up about a quarter of it. The rest was schedule information and short bios on the guests. Phil Jennings, Dave Duncan and Judith Merrill were also featured. Does anyone know who Phil Jennings is? I don't. Apparently he wrote SF in 1988. They come; they go; but the great live on. The not-so-great have to be dug up like this in old program books.

Ironically, I see that the artist guest of honour at *KeyCon 5* was Kevin Davies. Kevin was another Toronto fanartist who I knew, at the time, just well enough to use his first name. He had sprung out of a high school media club three or four years earlier, and was as long on ambition as he was on energy. His club had run a media con before anyone in it had even heard of *OSFiC*. A short time later, Kevin was involved in publishing a slick-looking media magazine called *Miriad*. Although he seemed more comfortable with the comics style of drawing, he was adaptable and contributed fanart to a number of local zines. When *Bakka's* old store sign finally fell off the building, Kevin was asked to paint the replacement. Personable, good looking, loaded with talent, hardworking, he was already fan GoH at conventions.

Meanwhile, after 15 years in fandom, I had only the rather inconspicuous role of *CUFF* delegate to play. But, why is that *ironic*? Kevin moved on rather soon after that. Although he still made annual appearances at the double birthday bash put on by Mike Glicksohn and Mike Harper, Kevin was doing his best to get ahead in the gaming business. I saw him at Glicksohn's funeral earlier this year... but he'd left fandom behind long ago. Twenty-three years later, though, and *I'm* still here... Of course, I'm not saying which course was the better. I'm just nursing an understandable grudge against a Johnny-come-lately.

Another irony of sorts is that *The Maple Leaf Rag* was just about the last of its kind. After Garth Spencer gave up the title, Mike Skeet continued a slicker, more pro oriented version with the abbreviated title *MLR*. I don't recall how many issues the *MLR* lasted, but I don't believe it was many. Keith Soltys published his 8th and last issue of *Torus* in 1989, and that was just about the

end of the Age of Publishing Giants in Canada. The two decades since have been dominated by Dale Spiers and *Opuntia* – a decent zine but somewhat off-the-map of the rest of fanzine fandom – and on the West Coast, Graeme Cameron and Garth Spencer. Both the West Coast guys seem determined to *educate* fandom rather than *entertain* it, and their zines tend to show it.

Since we're on the subject, the remainder of traditional fanzine fandom in Canada has amounted to me, Lloyd Penney, Murray Moore and Colin Hinz. I mention Colin because of his support of the dying art of mimeography and because he published an issue of *Novoid* last year. Of late, Felicity Walker has been doing a fine job editing *BCSFazine* as well. Altogether, that's less fanzine fandom than you would find in Seattle. Everybody else is running around organizing conventions as though it were a sustainable growth industry. Perhaps it is.

At present, it's clear that what attracts most fans to fandom are conventions. This is a sea-change that's been going on for as long as I've been *in* fandom. While once cons brought together fans who were science fiction hobbyists, today running a con *is* the hobby for most fans. Well and good for those who can afford the travel, or enjoy committee meetings and exercising miniscule amounts of authority. It does no-one any harm that I know of, and if it gives them pleasure, so be it.

So much about SF and the society we live in has changed since the 1970s, when I became involved in fandom, that I don't think fandom is at all what it was... nor can it ever be that again. Imitating the print medium is not particularly cool. No doubt it will attract a few oddballs, but most young people are clamoring to get on the internet so they can have their own web pages, write blogs, join *FaceBook* or *Twitter*, film themselves while screwing around, to shop on eBay or Amazon and play games. That's an altogether different sort of cool. Fandom today is not the exclusive property of introverts, misfits and loners who were once clued-in to a nonconformist literature.

If you want a younger generation to join fandom, fandom will have to be clued-in to the internet instead. Interactive media are different in important ways than the print media, though. What's in print is indelible. What's on the internet is a constantly changing flow of information, opinion and BS with no filters or ulterior purpose. As fandom moves online we can only be certain of one thing – it'll be different.

Not my cup of tea, though.

There, in a thumbnail, we have one of *CUFF*'s main problems. Of the Publishing Giants still practicing in this country, at least three of them have already been *CUFF* winners!

The fall-back position seems to be to award Auroras and select *CUFF* delegates on the basis of their recipe for hot, chili-chutney pierogi or the ability to juggle live chickens in front of a webcam while dressed as a Klingon. How in the world do you compare such things?

Returning reluctantly to topic, I have no memories of Kevin Davies at *KeyCon*. He may have been busy with program, and locked behind closed doors with his guitar much of the rest of the time. The only person I have any clear memory of knowing at the con was Fran Skene, and I may have made rather a pest of myself by hanging around. I went along with her party the only night I can recall going out of the con hotel for a meal. Someone enthused about a certain restaurant they knew and it was agreed on through the mysterious process of "consensus." From the start, I had

my doubts. While it might have been an exaggeration to call the place a “gourmet” hot dog emporium, hot dogs were indeed the restaurant’s specialty. It served them boiled or grilled, split or whole, on whole wheat or white, sesame seed, onion or plain and with any condiment you asked for. For that matter, I can’t say I had any complaints about the food.. The dogs were tasty and filling. What I kept to myself, though, was that they weren’t any better than a hot dog from one of the licensed wienie wagons on Queen street downtown, back in Toronto, where they only cost a buck-ana-half. I suppose if your idea of a treat is a *pierogi* – the absolutely blandest food in the firmament –then a hot dog must indeed seem like Food of the Gods. I wonder how many native Winterpegians went home with a belly ache from all the “spicy” food that night?

While speaking of pierogi, I had never eaten one before *KeyCon*. I suppose you *could* call it good luck that almost every other room party served them. There were two kinds, as I recall. Those with a pasty white filling, and those with a different pasty white filling. I was told that one was a very mild, white cheese and the other boiled potato. They were as bland as you’d expect a lump of dough with boiled potato or process cheese would be. Since that day, I’ve never understood the pride with which Winnipegians rave about their pierogi. It isn’t so much the essential idea that’s wrong. Wrap some meat or shrimp in dough , and it might have a chance. Spice it up and wok fry it for flavour. Put wasabi or soy on it. Blintzes, raviolis, Chinese pot stickers, Momo or Japanese gyoza, samosa, roti – anything would be better than bland pasty dough and a bland pasty filling! Of course, its possible that the Winnipeg version is not the real deal, and the same dish in the Ukraine would put a rijsttafel or dim sum to shame. The only way I know to settle the issue, though, is to run a fan fund to Kiev and have the winner write a trip report...

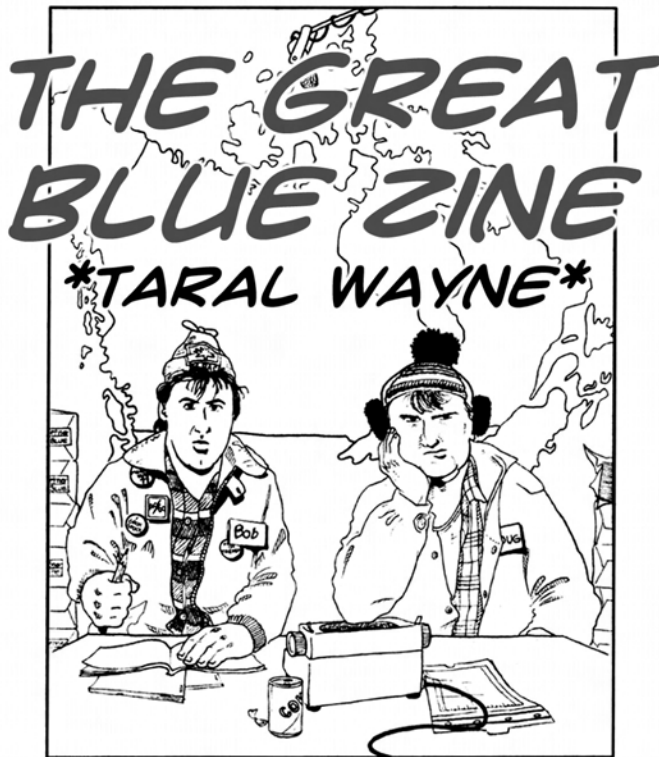
Of course, none of this has much to do with *KeyCon* or Winnipeg fandom today. Twenty-three years is a considerable span of time to look back over and for the world to have moved on. Indeed, I’ve moved on a considerable amount myself. Yet, strangely, while I’ve been the Fan *GoH* at the *Worldcon* in Montreal, I’ve never attended another Canadian convention west of Pearson International Airport. Nor am I likely to run for *CUFF* again. Once was enough, thanks!

Yet, it would be a mistake to connect my disappointing experiences at *KeyCon 5* to the general level of skepticism I have toward the fundamental concepts of the *Convention*, *CUFF* and the *Auroras*. I view my attitude as “realism.” Perhaps, ideally, there *should* be a Canadian fandom, but the reality is that we are part of American fandom. If it were only because of the proximity of larger, better organized groups of fans on the American side of the border, that would be enough in itself to ensure we were drawn into their orbit. But, we simply don’t differ from American fans in any significant way. The British and Australians have their own dialect of English – along with pubs and barbies, their own brands, their own TV programs, their own films, their own way of doing everything.

What have Canadians fans to show? *Molson’s* instead of *Coors*? Otherwise we tend to eat at the same McDonalds, watch the same episodes of *House*, drive the same GMs, read the same Steven King novels and attend the same *Worldcons* in Chicago, LA or Reno. This isn’t to say we aren’t different at all. I don’t carry a gun or worry that my next trip to the doctor bankrupting me. I flunked French in high school rather than Spanish. But in the little things that make us fans (rather than Canadians) we’re not different enough from our American cousins to make any sort of fuss over it.

It was inevitable that I'd run out of memories about KeyCon, and I have. Nor can I think of anything to add even as marginally relevant as my digressions on pierogi or the changing nature of fandom. Clearly, it's time to come to an end.

And I still haven't found my damned KeyCon report! Then again... maybe this is it. What's a 23 years wait, after all?



*...OR BOB & DOUG MCKENZIE
REVIEW YER FANZINES
New Canadian Fandom, Eh? 1982*

The camera comes on, and Bob & Doug are sitting, as usual, in front of a blow-up of Energumen, with the words "The Great Blue Zine" across it. Stacks of fanzines and empty cartons of beer bottles flank a coffee table, upon which are a few bottles of Molson's, and a heap of beer-stained zines. Bob & Doug are facing each other, already talking:

"Boy, huh. An did'ja see the look on her face when I took it out... "

"Hey, we're on!"

"Oh, yeah. What?"

“We’re on, eh, smarten up.” *The camera closes in on Bob.* “Hi. Welcome back to The Great Blue Issue. I’m Bob McKenzie and he’s my brother Doug. We’re gonna review some fanzines we’ve been gettin, eh, and... aren’t’cha gonna do it, Doug?” *Camera swings over to Doug, who begins to crow their theme.*

“Do do do do do do do doh... Do do do do do do do do doh... !”

“Right,” *continues Bob,* “Now whatcha doin?” *Doug has pulled his toque over his face.*

“Get the camera off me.”

“What?”

“Get the camera off me!” *The camera obliges.*

“Come offit, eh? Put the camera back on im.”

“No, get off it, I don’ wan’em to look at me. Okay, then, I’m gonna sit with my back turned, eh?”

“Take off. Uh, folks? My brother an me, eh? We were down at the tavern havin us a couple a beers last night. An Doug, y’know, can take his likker as good as me, but he musta been drinkin on an empty stomach or sumthin, an, anyway, he got sick like.”

“I did not!” *Doug is still sitting with his back to the camera.*

“You did too! You threw up all over the floor, an yer bran new duds. Well, look, anyway, he tosses his cookies, y’know, an two er three guys inna back think it’s funny, but nobody else things nothing of it, so I take im out back to get some fresh air, y’know, and this Paki goes by who sees Doug getting sick. An he comes up to us, eh, an this Paki tells Doug he shouldn’t be foul in the streets like. The Paki, eh, like he owned the place or sumthin? Well Doug, y’know, tells him to fuck off, an tells him to go back where he came from if he don’t like it here. So then this Paki, eh, calls him an animal an give us a lotta bullshit about belongin here like he was Canajun, y’know, and how we should learn to behave like him. Besides, he said he was born in Montreal, y’know.

“Yeah, he was really sassy for a Paki.”

“So Doug he takes a swing at him. Ha, ha. An y’know, he wasn’t a Paki at all, eh?”

“Naw,” *says Doug, facing the set still,* “He was a fuckin Sikh.”

“An he gives Doug two black eyes. We gotta go down to the station later...”

“He did not give me two black eyes!” *Doug turns back to the camera. He has two black eyes and a swollen lip.*

“I fell onna ice.”

“Yeah, sure, so why we gotta go down to the cop shop then, eh? I thought you were gonna charge im with abrogated assault?”

“I am.”

“How y’gonna do that if he didn’t puncher eyes? You fell down, remember?”

“He punched one eye.”

“Which one?”

“How’d I know which eye he punched? The no-good fucker punched one of them an I hurt the other, so I couldn’t see which one it was no more. Why dincha help me, eh, when that Goddamn Paki hit me?” *Bob pouts with as much indignation as he can with a swollen mouth.*

“I slipped onna ice too.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah, see.” *Bob puts down a beer, and indicates an eye with his finger. Doug leans over to look.*

“But I got a technician to put some pancake makeup on it, y’know.”

“Why dincha tell me that, instead a lettin me go on camera with two black eyes, y’hoser! I’m gonna sock you!”

“Take off, eh! We gotta go now, folks. We’re outta time again, but next week fer sure we’ll review all these fanzines, okay?”

...sound of scuffling comes from the stage as camera and pickup fade..

“Lay off, Doug. I’m warnin ya.”

“Y’don’t let me have any beer in my Molson’s bottle either...”

End credits roll – “This program segment is published by the editor for the sole purpose of compliance with the Canadian Content in Fanzines Act of 1970. If you don’t like it, take off, eh?”



The Great White Zine is a collection of articles on Canadian fan history written by Taral Wayne, at one time or another, and published in various obscure places. The material is probably, mostly accurate... at least nothing is deliberately falsified... unless it's fiction. Then all bets are off.

The author of all this crap has been nominated 11 times for the fanart Hugo as of this writing, enjoyed a free trip to Montreal for the 2009 Worldcon as the Fan Guest of Honour, has won the Rotsler award and has been nominated for a bunch of other silly stuff. He spends entirely too much time writing and publishing and other increasingly marginal fan activity, but he's too old to change now. Really.

