

# Canadian Mags organize

by Merrilee Robson  
reprinted from the Ubysey

Geoff Hancock, editor of Canadian Fiction Magazine, says when he talks to people about Canada's magazines, he inevitably gets the same responses.

First people say that they have no idea there were so many magazines in Canada. Next they wonder why these magazines are not on the news stands and why there is no catalogue which lists them.

Hancock is the western board member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association, a group that is trying to answer these questions and make Canadians more aware of the impressive number of magazines in Canada.

The C.P.P.A. consists of 190 member magazines and they are receiving up to 12 applications a month from magazines wishing to join. The association's members range from scholarly journals and literary magazines to mass circulation magazines such as Saturday Night, trade journals and specialist magazines.

Hancock says most Canadian magazines do not have large circulations. The large ones such as Maclean's, with a circulation of 75,000 and Chatelaine, whose circulation is one million, are not members of C.P.P.A. They belong to the Magazine Association of Canada, which has 14 members and a minimum membership fee of \$5,000.

"C.P.P.A. formed four years ago, with 10 members, as a nationwide lobbying group for magazines which couldn't afford \$5,000," Hancock said. C.P.P.A.'s membership fees range from \$50 for magazines with a circulation of less than 2,000 to \$750 for magazines whose circulation is 50,000 and over.

The members of the C.P.P.A. felt the sole purpose of the Magazine Association of Canada was to present magazines as a place for advertisers to spend money. They were not promoting distribution and were not promoting the quality of Canadian magazines.

The aim of C.P.P.A., by comparison, is to organize a distribution centre, to promote member magazines and to provide services for members on a co-operative basis to save costs.

The services included an advertising exchange within the membership and promotional displays at conferences of the Canadian Booksellers' Association.

C.P.P.A. has also established an index of Canadian magazines. Such an index is invaluable for library sales, which account for half the circulation of some small magazines. Last year the Canadian Periodical index included 88 titles. This year, as a result of C.P.P.A.'s efforts, the index will increase to list over 200 entries.

The federal government's Bill C-58, which removed the special tax privileges accorded to advertisers in foreign media, helped the association's efforts.

Time Canada failed to meet the required 80 per cent Canadian content and Time Canada president Stephen Larue stated that soon after the bill was passed their ad revenue had decreased by 30 per cent. Canadian magazines have shown comparative increases in advertising revenue.

Air Canada cut its in-flight Time subscription by 50 per cent. Both Air Canada and CP Air reduced the number of American magazines they carry and replaced them with Canadian magazines.

C.P.P.A. has also published four catalogues of magazines in Canada, but Hancock says their membership is growing so fast that the cata-

logues are obsolete by the time they are printed. The first catalogue listed 60 magazines; with the second the number had grown to 110. In November, 1976 the association produced a catalogue listing 130 titles. This catalogue had a press run of 100,000 and was funded partly by the Canadian Council and the Ontario Arts Council. A new catalogue will be released this spring and it will include 190 titles.



— matt king photo  
... why aren't these on newsstands?

"Of the 14 major distributors in Canada, 13 are American. The fourteenth is British. Which is why all the magazine racks look the same across the country," Hancock said. Some C.P.P.A. members don't have a large enough press run or have such specialized interests that these distributors are not interested in carrying them. The magazines which are carried are usually members of M.A.C.

"If some of our members are fortunate enough to be carried by these distributors they still have to put up with limited shelf space." The returns policy (torn covers) and poor displaying have made it financially difficult for magazines to be displayed. Sometimes as many as 50 to 75 per cent of the magazines are returned.

Playboy and Penthouse can afford to pay the seller 25 per cent of the copy price for displaying the magazines prominently, as opposed to the regular 15 per cent.

The problem is further complicated by the process of "dumping" magazines in Canada. Magazines such as Hi-Fi and Stereo Review, which have a total U.S. subscription of 60,000, prints an additional 60,000 and dumps them on the much smaller Canadian market because of its large press run the publisher's cost is only about 35 cents for a magazine which costs \$1.25, Hancock said.

Canadian magazines cannot afford such a large press run and their losses on returns are greater.

So C.P.P.A. has begun its own distribution. The association tried out their promotional scheme in southern Ontario. This promotion ranged from bookstores to laundromats and antique stores that expressed an interest in Canadian magazines.

"We found a phenomenal success in doing our own distribution," Hancock said. A laundromat which carried Cinema Canada sold all 15 copies in two days. Hancock said this shows there is an interest in Canadian magazines if they can be found.

However, their distribution scheme has been hurt somewhat by the recent increases in postal rates. The second class postal rate for international mail has recently increased 400 per cent, Hancock said. Several Canadian magazines had to cancel their American and international subscriptions.

Hancock's own Canadian Fiction Magazine used to cost six cents to mail to the U.S. but now the cost has risen to 45 cents. The subscription price has risen accordingly.

As 97 per cent of Canadian magazines are sold through subscriptions, these postal increases have become a serious expense.

C.P.P.A. has been trying to get the rates rolled back because the post office did not notify them of the increase and magazines which are honoring their subscriptions at the old rate are losing money.

"Readership surveys haven't been done but we know magazines are big business. Just look at the U.S. magazine sales."

The largest American magazine in Canada was TV Guide, with a Canadian subscription of 173,000

150,000 promotional pieces to university bookstores in all the major universities, including UBC.

"This cultural battle is important," Hancock says.

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