

ENTERTAINMENT

Recently out of school

Young publishers gain in cut-throat business

By AGNES KRUCHIO

There are few options open when you are Canadian and a recent graduate of cartooning school. You can a) move to New York or Boston, live in a garret and try to work for some of the publishing houses there, b) you can become an artist's artist in Toronto, live in a garret, and attempt to make a living from selling your paintings, or c) you can try to get work in Canada as a political cartoonist, but there aren't many of those around; the occasional Macpherson or Donato will get work, but as for the rest?

But then again you could be a nifty kid from Windsor, and open your own shop. After having done several magazines at Sheridan college Jim Waley 24, found that putting out a comic magazine was not much more difficult, and with a little bit of financial help from his friends, he plunged into publishing, one of the most competitive industries in Canada, and is currently going into his third year of publishing Orb, a bimonthly comic magazine.

His office is still a garret, and the Waleys' apartment at Richmond and Bathurst is next door to the Orb offices; there is a sleek black cat named Inky. But there are deadlines to meet, and even though it is Sunday night, several of the Orb people (most of them freelance artists) float in and out of the office.

"We're always trying to do something different," says Waley. In this they are radically different from most comics and comic magazines that work on the same predictable patterns.

"It would be commercially more sound to keep the same characters going," says Matt Rush, 23, whose official title is "senior editor and art director". "But continuous cartoons are like sit-coms" he continues. "Every Lucy episode is like the one before or the one after. It's formula selling, and it's very boring," says Rust.

"If you take a look at the major US comics, (and almost all comics are produced in the US) they pretty well have their own standard styles, says Jim. "Warren comics,

for example, is using the same three artists to do its cover on a rotating basis; you can tell it's a Warren comic by its cover."

"It's dull, dull, dull," says Waley. Since most of the artists that work for Orb are "pretty good", Waley leaves them to their own devices. Unlike many US magazines, they do not have a 'house-style' that they would want their artists to emulate. "The more styles, we carry, the better we are," says Waley.

"The sort of things we deal with — vengeance, love, hate envy, — are all basic to human beings," says Rust. "And then," he adds, "we are not after little kids". The basic difference between Orb and



On location in Orb. Deja-vu?

ordinary comics is that they are on the newsstand as a magazine, selling at \$1 each, instead of the kids' comics stand, for a quarter.

But, says Waley, "it's escapism literature; some of the personalities in Orb are very violent, mostly because they are 'screwed up' in some way," he says. "Still, there are very few characters who use violence only to solve their problems." Moreover, it's all "improbable violence", he says.

"There is not much of a chance of using the Electric Warrior, one of our most violent characters, for example, as a blueprint for violence, since one would have to invent a sonic blade, or an intergalactic spaceship or something," Rust in particular, but all of the artists on staff, are avid science fiction readers; they translate what they read into their own

terms.

"The thing that disturbs me most about TV violence", says Waley, is that "it's all so clean and antiseptic. People do not die like that. If violence would be shown in all its horrors, as in Orb, people would be less likely to go out and imitate it," he says.

Ideas for the many different episodes come together on a fairly impromptu basis; since all the artists associated with Orb are at least competent in all the necessary areas (writing, pencilling a drawing, inking it, colouring it, and lettering) it is "a matter of coordinating talents and meshing egos". Waley is in charge of that operation.

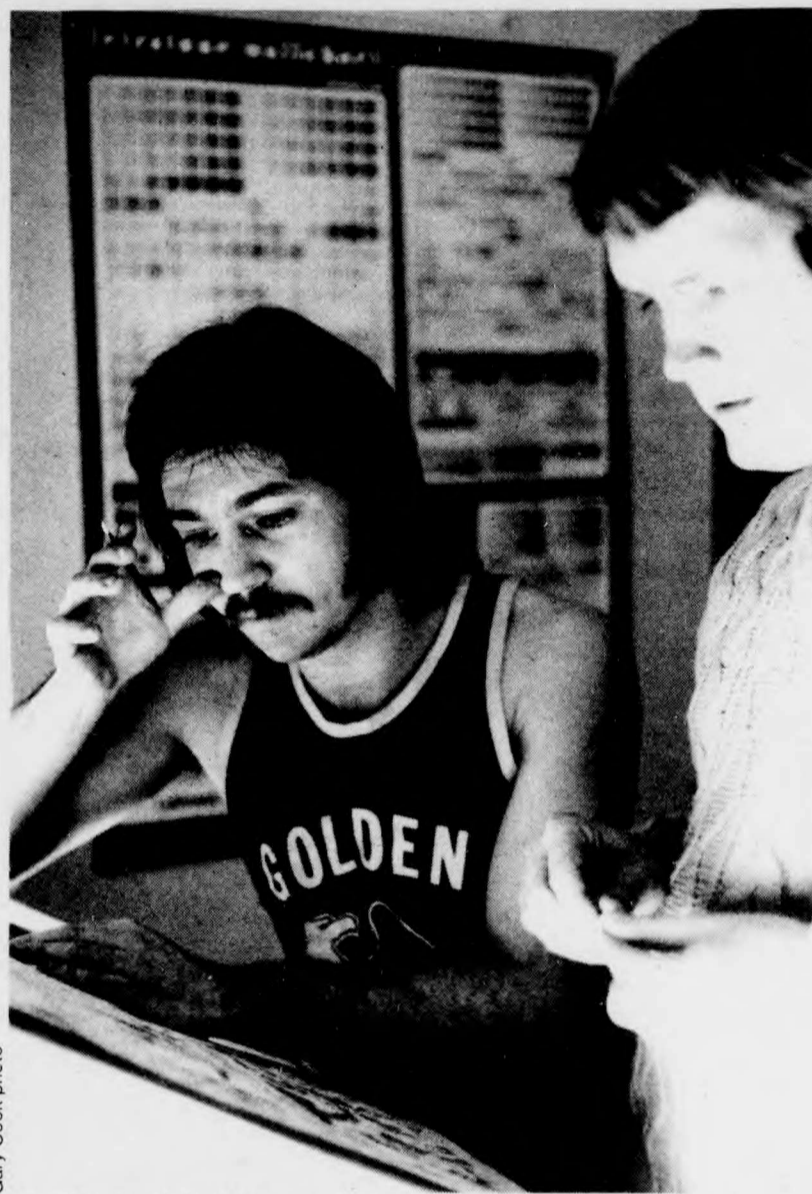
Up till now it has worked out fairly successfully. They have a national distribution of 25,000 and 4,000 extra copies go to advance circulation to US markets. They have received the praises of comic buffs everywhere, and are soon to go into corner drug and milkstores. The problem with that, says Waley, is that such stores often want kickbacks. "It's a real racket", he says. But their distribution is now in the hands of one of the major US distributors, and they are "mutually impressed with each other", Waley says.

They are planning to expand in the near future: a Mad style magazine, called Tilt ("the magazine of unbalanced humour") is planned and is to appear by the end of the summer, along with individual comic books for characters such as Northern Light, and the Electric Warrior, "depending on reader response". Right now they average about 5 letters a day, from people anywhere from 12 to 32 year olds.

It also depends on "how much money we have in our pocket", Rust says. The magazine, since its early days when the contributors chipped in to finance the first 1,000 copies, still depends on its members to sustain it. Advertising, the main source of income for magazines such as Orb, still has "to be improved on", says Waley.

"It is no longer necessary for young cartoonists to go south," says Waley. "If publication is possible anywhere," he says, "it is possible here."

"Besides, we are looking for some good, healthy competition to keep us on our toes," he says.



Matt Rust and Jim Waley overlook the latest issue of Orb.

Rare films in weekly series thrill connoisseur, student

By RICHARD SPIEGELMAN

A rare event took place last Wednesday night when Birth of a Nation was shown to a large audience of film students and film buffs.

The rare combination of a top quality print of this classic movie which was also tinted, and a live piano accompaniment made this more than just another screening. It was a magical event.

The man at the piano was David Beard (proprietor of Cine Books and man-about-town) and his skill at the key board was one of the main

magical ingredients.

The film was made by D.W. Griffith in 1915. It was the longest and most spectacular American film up to that time (12 reels). It firmly entrenched the style of narrative film as the mold for the majority of American film productions from that time on.

PORTRAIT OF A REGION

Birth of a Nation is essentially about the United States South, and it portrays the conditions during and after the Civil War, emancipation of the slaves and the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

The dramatic, political and sociological content of the film overwhelmed the audience when it was released. Today much of the film's impact is negated by its blatantly racist philosophy.

Based on a novel called The Clansmen, its language, racial stereotypes and obvious romanticization of the Ku Klux Klan strongly overshadows the more sedate historical elements.

FREE SERIES

The Wednesday Night Free Film Series is a venture of the film department. The idea for such a film series has been long kicked around by many people in the department. Fund-raising for it got under way last term, when Bethune Films under Wolfgang Lamers' direction cooperated in showing three commercial films. Student councils are also contributing to the series, the films for which were selected by Doug Davidson.

Rare films of high quality will be obtained for each Wednesday night. The films will be shown in Curtis Lecture Hall L at 7 pm. Look for the posters with the director's chair for upcoming films.



York prof writes text

By IRA MICAY

Motion Pictures and the Arts in Canada; the Business and the Law is the name of a new book to be published this week by McGraw-Hill Ryerson. The author of the book is Garth Dradinsky, a practicing lawyer and a faculty member in the film department at York.

The two-hundred and nine page book is a first of its kind in Canada to examine law as it relates to all areas of the arts. It covers various topics such as copyright, contract, obscenity, defamation of character, and invasion of privacy.

Related particularly to film are the sections describing the various relationships encountered in motion pictures, such as producer-screenwriter, producer-director, and producer-actor. There is a comparison between Canadian and American laws discussing their differences.

In the area of contract Law, many of the statutes are similar, but other areas such as torts, invasion of privacy, and copyright law there is a substantial difference between the rulings in Canada and in the

US.

The book is not meant to serve as a replacement for a lawyer, to the artist or producer involved in legal matters. Instead, it hopes to acquaint them with the laws that affect them to help them save time and money when they are ready to approach a lawyer for advice.

Although he is only twenty-eight years old, Dradinsky has long been involved in the entertainment industry. He has been previously been the publisher of the Canadian Film Digest, and is also the Founder and publisher of Impact Magazine. He was also the producer of the show Flick-flack for Global television.

Currently Dradinsky is affiliated with the Toronto lawfirm Thomson and Rogers and has a thriving practice in all aspects of the law as related to the entertainment industry. He is involved in film on an international scale, travelling coast to coast every few weeks.

The book, which retails for \$14.95, will probably be revised every two years or so as laws and rulings are updated.